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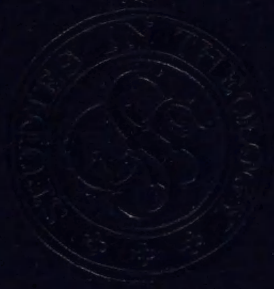

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A Handbook of Christian Ethics

BY

ARCHIBALD B. D. ALEXANDER, M.A., D.D.

AUTHOR OF 'A SHORT HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY,'
'THE ETHICS OF ST. PAUL,' ETC.

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1914

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PREFACE

THE object of this volume is to present a brief but comprehensive view of the Christian conception of the moral life. In order to conform with the requirements of the series to which the volume belongs, the writer has found the task of compression one of almost insurmountable difficulty; and some topics, only less important than those dealt with, have been necessarily omitted. The book claims to be, as its title indicates, simply a handbook or introduction to Christian Ethics. It deals with principles rather than details, and suggests lines of thought instead of attempting an exhaustive treatment of the subject. At the same time, in the author's opinion, no really vital question has been overlooked. The treatise is intended primarily for students, but it is hoped that it may prove serviceable to those who desire a succinct account of the moral and social problems of the present day.

A fairly full bibliography has been added, which, along with the references to authorities in the body of the work, may be helpful to those who wish to prosecute the study. For the convenience of readers the book has been divided into four sections, entitled, Postulates, Personality, Character, and Conduct; and a detailed synopsis of contents has been supplied.

To the Rev. W. R. Thomson, B.D. of Bellshill, Scotland, who read the chapters in type, and generally put at his disposal much valuable suggestion, the author would record his most sincere thanks.

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CHRISTIANITY AND ETHICS

INTRODUCTION

A PLEA FOR THE STUDY OF CHRISTIAN ETHICS

If, as Matthew Arnold says, conduct is three-fourths of life, then a careful inquiry into the laws of conduct is indispensable to the proper interpretation of the meaning and purpose of life. Conduct of itself, however, is merely the outward expression of character; and character again has its roots in personality; so that if we are to form a just conception of life we have to examine the forces which shape human personality and raise it to its highest power and efficiency. In estimating the value of man all the facts of consciousness and experience must be considered. Hence no adequate account of the end of life can be given without regard to that which, if it is true, must be the most stupendous fact of history—the fact of Christ.

If the Christian is a man to whom no incident of experience is secular and no duty insignificant, because all things belong to God and all life is dominated by the spirit of Christ, then Christian Ethics must be the application of Christianity to conduct; and its theme must be the systematic study of the ideals and forces which are alone adequate to shape character and fit man for the highest conceivable destiny—fellowship with, and likeness to, the Divine Being in whose image he has been made. This, of course, may be said to be the aim of all theology. The theologian must not be content to discuss merely speculative problems about God and man. He must seek above

all things to bring the truths of revelation to bear upon human practice. All knowledge has its practical implicate. The dogma which cannot be translated into duty is apt to be a vague abstraction.

In all ages there has been a tendency to separate truth and duty. But knowledge has two sides; it is at once a revelation and a challenge. There is no truth which has not its corresponding obligation, and no obligation which has not its corresponding truth. And not until every truth is rounded into its duty, and every duty is referred back into its truth shall we attain to that clearness of vision and consistency of moral life, to promote which is the primary task of Christian Ethics.

It is this practical element which gives to the study of morals its justification and makes it specially important for the Christian teacher. In this sense Ethics is really the crown of theology and ought to be the end of all previous study.

As a separate branch of study Christian Ethics dates only from the Reformation. It was natural, and perhaps inevitable that the first efforts of the Church should be occupied with the formation and elaboration of dogma. With a few notable exceptions, among whom may be mentioned Basil, Clement, Alquin and Thomas Aquinas, the Church fathers and schoolmen paid but scanty attention to the ethical side of religion. It was only after the Reformation that theology, Roman and Protestant alike, was divided into different branches. The Roman Catholic name for what we style Ethics is 'moral philosophy,' which, however, consists mainly of directions for father confessors in their dealing with perplexed souls. Christian Ethics appears for the first time as the name of a treatise by a French theologian of the Calvinistic persuasion—Danæus, whose work, however, is confined to an exposition of the Decalogue. The first recorded work of the Lutheran church is the *Theologia Moralis*, written in 1634, by George Calixtus.

But the modern study of the subject really dates from

Schleiermacher (1768-1834), who divides theology into two sections, Dogmatics and Ethics, giving to the latter an independent treatment. Since his time Ethics has been regarded as a separate discipline, and within the last few decades increasing attention has been devoted to it.

This strong ethical tendency is one of the most noticeable features of the present age. Everywhere to-day the personal human interest is in evidence. We see it in the literature of the age and especially in the best poetry, beginning already with Coleridge and Wordsworth, and continued in Tennyson and Browning. It is the inner life of man as depicted to us by these master singers, the story of the soul, even more than the delineation of nature which appeals to man's deepest experience and evokes his finest response. We see it in the art of our times, which, not content to be a mere expression of sensuous beauty or lifeless nature, seeks to be instinct with human sympathy and to become the vehicle of the ideas and aims of man. We see it in modern fiction, which is no longer the narration of a simple tale, but the subtle analysis of character, and the intricate study of the passions and ambitions of common life. History to-day is not concerned so much with recording the intrigues of kings and the movements of armies as with scrutinising the motives and estimating the personal forces which have shaped the ages. Even in the domain of theology itself this tendency is visible. Our theologians are not content with discussing abstract doctrines or recounting the decisions of church councils, but are turning to the gospels and seeking to depict the life of Jesus—to probe the secret of His divine humanity and to interpret the meaning for the world of His unique personality.

Nor is this tendency confined to professional thinkers and theologians, it is affecting the common mind of the laity. 'Never was there a time,' says a modern writer, 'when plain people were less concerned with the metaphysics or the ecclesiasticism of Christianity. The construction of systems and the contention of creeds which once appeared the central themes of human interest are now re-

garded by millions of busy men and women as mere echoes of ancient controversies, if not mere mockeries of the problems of the present day.' The Church under the inspiration of this new feeling for humanity is turning with fresh interest to the contemplation of the character of Jesus Christ, and is rising to a more lofty idea of its responsibilities towards the world. More than ever in the past, it is now felt that Christianity must vindicate itself as a practical religion; and that in view of the great problems—scientific, social and industrial, which the new conditions of an advancing civilisation have created, the Church, if it is to fulfil its function as the interpreter and guide of thought, must come down from its heights of calm seclusion and grapple with the actual difficulties of men, not indeed by assuming a political rôle or acting as a divider and judge amid conflicting secular aims, but by revealing the mind of Christ and bringing the principles of the gospel to bear upon the complex life of society.

No one who reflects upon the spirit of the times will doubt that there are reasons of urgent importance why this aspect of Christian life and duty, which we have been considering, should be specially insisted upon to-day. Of these the first and foremost is the prevalence of a materialistic philosophy. Taking its rise in the evolutionary theories of last century, this view is now being applied with relentless logic as an interpretation of the problems of society by a school of socialistic writers. Man, it is said, is the creature of heredity and environment alone. Condition creates character, and relief from the woes of humanity is to be sought, not in the transformation of the individual but in the revolutionising of the circumstances of life. As a consequence of this philosophy of externalism there is a filtering down of these materialistic views to the multitude, who care, indeed, little for theories, but are quick to be affected by a prevailing tone. Underlying the feeling of unrest and dissatisfaction, so marked a feature of our present day life, there is distinctly discernible among the masses a loosening of religious faith and a slackening

of moral obligation. The idea of personality and the sense of duty are not so vivid and strong as they used to be. A vague sentimentalising about sin has taken the place of the more robust view of earlier times, and evil is traced to untoward environment rather than to feebleness of individual will. And finally, to name no other cause, there is a tendency in our day among all classes to divorce religion from life—to separate the sacred from the secular, and to regard worship and work as belonging to two entirely distinct realms of existence.

For these reasons, among others, there is a special need, as it seems to us, for a systematic study of Christian Ethics on the part of those who are to be the leaders of thought and the teachers of the people. The materialistic view of life must be met by a more adequate Christian philosophy. The unfaith and pessimism of the age must be overcome by the advocacy of an idealistic conception which insists not only upon the personality and worth of man, involving duties as well as rights, but also upon the supremacy of conscience in obedience to the law of Christ. Above all, we need an ethic which will show that religion must be coextensive with life, transfiguring and spiritualising all its activities and relationships. Life is a unity and all duty is one, whether it be duty to God or duty to man. It must be all of a piece, like the robe of Christ, woven from the top to the bottom without seam. It takes its spring from one source and is dominated by one spirit. In the Christianity of Christ there stand conspicuous two great ideas bound together, indeed, in a higher—love to God the Father. These are personal perfection and the service of mankind—the culture of self and the care of others. 'Be ye perfect' and 'love your neighbour as yourself.' It is the glory of Christianity to have harmonised these seemingly competing aims. The disciple of Christ finds that he cannot realise his own life except as he seeks the good of others; and that he cannot effectively help his fellows except by giving to them that which he himself is. This, as we take it, is the Christian conception of the moral life; and it is

the business of Christian Ethics to show that it is at once reasonable and practical.

The present volume will be divided into *four* main parts, entitled, *Postulates*, *Personality*, *Character* and *Conduct*. The *first* will deal with the meaning of Ethics generally and its relation to cognate subjects; and specially with the Philosophical, Psychological and Theological presuppositions of Christian Ethics. The *second* part will be devoted to man as moral subject, and will analyse the capacities of the soul which respond to the calls and claims of the new Life. The *third* Section will involve a consideration of the formative Principles of Character, the moulding of the soul, the Ideals, Motives and Forces by means of which the 'New Man' is 'recreated' and fashioned. *Finally*, under Conduct, the Virtues, Duties and Rights of man will be discussed; and the various spheres of service and institutions of society examined in relation to which the moral life in its individual and social aspects is manifested and developed.

SECTION A

POSTULATES

CHAPTER I

THE NATURE AND SCOPE OF ETHICS

PHILOSOPHY has been defined as 'thinking things together.' Every man, says Hegel, is a philosopher, and in so far as it is the natural tendency of the human mind to connect and unify the manifold phenomena of life, the paradox of the German thinker is not without a measure of truth. But while this is only the occasional pastime of the ordinary individual, it is the conscious and habitual aim of the philosopher. In daily life people are wont to make assumptions which they do not verify, and employ figures of speech which of necessity are partial and inadequate. It is the business of philosophy to investigate the pre-suppositions of common life and to translate into realities the pictures of ordinary language. It was the method of Socrates to challenge the current modes of speaking and to ask his fellow-men what they meant when they used such words as 'goodness,' 'virtue' 'justice.' Every time you employ any of these terms, he said, you virtually imply a whole theory of life. If you would have an intelligent understanding of yourself and the world of which you form a part, you must cease to live by custom and speak by rote. You must seek to bring the manifold phenomena of the universe and the various experiences of life into some kind of unity and see them as co-ordinated parts of a whole.

When men thus begin to reflect on the origin and connection of things, three questions at once suggest themselves —what, how, and why? What is the world? How do I know it? and why am I here? We might briefly classify the three great departments of human thought as attempts

to answer these three inquiries. What exists is the problem of Metaphysics. What am I and how do I know? is the question of Psychology. What is my purpose, what am I to do? is the subject of Ethics. These questions are closely related, and the answer given to one largely determines the solution of the others. The truths gained by philosophical thought are not confined to the kingdom of abstract speculation but apply in the last resort to life. The impulse to know is only a phase of the more general impulse to be and to act. Beneath all man's activities, as their source and spring, there is ever some dim perception of an end to be attained. 'The ultimate end,' says Paulsen, 'impelling men to meditate upon the nature of the universe, will always be the desire to reach some conclusion concerning the meaning of the source and goal of their lives.' The origin and aim of all philosophy is consequently to be sought in Ethics.

1. If we ask more particularly what Ethics is, definition affords us some light. It is to Aristotle that we are indebted for the earliest use of this term, and it was he who gave to the subject its title and systematic form. The name τα ἠθικά is derived from ἦθος, character, which again is closely connected with ἔθος, signifying custom. Ethics, therefore, according to Aristotle is the science of character, character being understood to mean according to its etymology, customs or habits of conduct. But while the modern usage of the term 'character' suggests greater inwardness than would seem to be implied in the ancient definition, it must be remembered that under the title of Ethics Aristotle had in view, not only a description of the outward habits of man, but also that which gives to custom its value, viz., the sources of action, the motives, and especially the ends which guide a man in the conduct of life. But since men live before they reflect, Ethics and Morality are not synonymous. So long as there is a congruity between the customs of a people and the practical requirements of life, ethical questions do not occur. It is only when difficulties arise as to matters of right, for which the

existing usages of society offer no solution, that reflection upon morality awakens. No longer content with blindly accepting the formulæ of the past, men are prompted to ask, whence do these customs come, and what is their authority? In the conflict of duties, which a wider outlook inevitably creates, the inquirer seeks to estimate their relative values, and to bring his conception of life into harmony with the higher demands and larger ideals which have been disclosed to him. This has been the invariable course of ethical inquiry. At different stages of history—in the age of the Sophists of Ancient Greece, when men were no longer satisfied with the old forms of life and truth: at the dawn of the Christian era, when a new ideal was revealed in Christ: during the period of the Reformation, when men threw off the bondage of the past and made a stand for the rights of the individual conscience: and in more recent times, when in the field of political life the antithesis between individual and social instincts had awakened larger and more enlightened views of civic and social responsibility—the study of Ethics, as a science of moral life, has come to the front.

Ethics may, therefore, be defined as the science of the end of life—the science which inquires into its meaning and purpose. But inasmuch as the end or purpose of life involves the idea of some good which is in harmony with the highest conceivable well-being of man—some good which belongs to the true fulfilment of life—Ethics may also be defined as the science of the highest good or *summum bonum*.

Finally, Ethics may be considered not only as the science of the highest good or ultimate end of life, but also as the study of all that conditions that end, the dispositions, desires and motives of the individual, all the facts and forces which bear upon the will and shape human life in its various social relationships.

II. Arising out of this general definition three features may be mentioned as descriptive of its distinctive character among the sciences.

1. Ethics is concerned with the *ideal* of life. By an ideal we mean a better state of being than has been actually realised. We are confessedly not as we should be, and there floats before the minds of men a vision of some higher condition of life and society than that which exists. Life divorced from an ideal is ethically valueless. Some conception of the supreme good is the imperative demand and moral necessity of man's being. Hence the chief business of Ethics is to answer the question : What is the supreme good ? For what should a man live ? What, in short, is the ideal of life ? In this respect Ethics as a science is distinguished from the physical sciences. They explain facts and trace sequences, but they do not form ideals or endeavour to move the will in the direction of them.

2. Ethics again is concerned with a *norm* of life, and in this sense it is frequently styled a normative science. That is to say, it is a science which prescribes rules or maxims according to which life is to be regulated. This is sometimes expressed by saying that Ethics treats of what *ought to be*. The ideal must not be one which simply floats in the air. It must be an ideal which is possible, and, therefore, as such, obligatory. It is useless to feel the worth of a certain idea, or even to speak of the desirability of it, if we do not feel also that it ought to be realised. Moral judgments imply an 'ought,' and that 'ought' implies a norm or standard, in the light of which, as a criterion, all obligation must be tested, and according to which all conduct must be regulated.

3. Ethics, once more, is concerned with the *will*. It is based specifically on the fact that man is not only an intellectual being (capable of knowing) and a sensitive being (possessed of feeling) but also a volitional being ; that is, a being endowed with self-determining activity. It implies that man is responsible for his intentions, dispositions and actions. The idea of a supreme ideal at which he is to aim and a norm or standard of conduct according to which he ought to regulate his life, would have no meaning if we did not presuppose the power of self-determination. What-

ever is not willed has no moral value. Where there is no freedom of choice, we cannot speak of an action as either good or evil.[1] When we praise or blame a man's conduct we do so under the assumption that his action is voluntary. In all moral action purpose is implied. This is the meaning of the well-known dictum of Kant, 'There is nothing in the world . . . that can be called good without qualification except a good will. A good will is good, not because of what it performs or effects, not by its aptness for the attainment of some proposed end, but simply by virtue of the volition.'[2] It is the inner aim, the good will which alone gives moral worth to any endeavour. It is not what I do but the reason why I do it which is chiefly of ethical value. The essence of virtue resides in the will, not in the achievement; in the intention or motive, not in the result.

III. The propriety of styling Ethics a science has sometimes been questioned. Science, it is said, has to do with certain necessary and uniform facts of experience; its object is simply to trace effects from causes and to formulate laws according to which sequences inevitably result from certain ascertained causes or observed facts. But is not character, with which Ethics confessedly deals, just that concerning which no definite conclusions can be predicted? Is not conduct, dependent as it is on the human will, just the element in man which cannot be explained as the resultant of calculable forces? If the will is free, and is the chief factor in the moulding of life, then you cannot forecast what line conduct will take or predict what shape character will assume. The whole conception of Ethics as a science must, it is contended, fall to the ground, if we admit a variable and incalculable element in conduct.

Some writers, on this account, are disposed to regard Ethics as an art rather than a science, and indeed, like every normative science, it may be regarded as lying midway between them. A science may be said to teach us to know

[1] Cf. Mackenzie, *Manual of Ethics*, p. 32; also Wuttke, *Christian Ethics* (Eng. Trans.), vol. i. p. 14.

[2] *Metaph. of Morals*, sect. i.

and an art to do : but as has been well remarked, 'a normative science teaches to know how to do.' [1] Ethics may indeed be regarded both as a science and an art. In so far as it examines and explains certain phenomena of character it is a science : but in so far as it attempts to regulate human conduct by instruction and advice it is an art.[2] Yet when all is said, in so far as Ethics has to do with the volitional side of man,—with decisions and acts of will,—there must be something indeterminate and problematic in it which precludes it from being designated an exact science. A certain variableness belongs to character, and conduct cannot be pronounced good or bad without reference to the acting subject. Actions cannot be wholly explained by law, and a large portion of human life (and that the highest and noblest) eludes analysis. A human being is not simply a part of the world. He is able to break in upon the sequence of events and set in motion new forces whose effects neither he himself nor his fellows can estimate. It is the unique quality of rational beings that in great things and in small things they act from ideas. The magic power of thought cannot be exaggerated. Great conceptions have great consequences, and they rule the world. A new spiritual idea shoots forth its rays and enlightens to larger issues generations of men. There is a mystery in every forth-putting of will-power, and every expression of personality. Character cannot be computed. The art of goodness, of living nobly, if so unconscious a thing may be called an art, is one certainly which defies complete scientific treatment. It is with facts like these that Ethics has to do ; and while we may lay down broad general principles which must underlie the teaching of every true prophet and the conduct of every good man, there will always be an element with which science cannot cope.

IV. It will not be necessary, after what has been said, to trace at any length the relations between Ethics and the

[1] Mackenzie, *Manual of Ethics*, p. 8. See also Muirhead, *Elements of Ethics*.

[2] Hyslop, *Elements of Ethics*, p. 1.

special mental sciences, such as Logic, Æsthetics, and Politics.

1. *Logic* is the science of the formal laws of thought, and is concerned not with the truth of phenomena, but merely with the laws of correct reasoning about them. Ethics establishes the laws according to which we ought to act. Logic legislates for the reason, and decerns the laws which the intellect must obey if it would think correctly. Both sciences determine what is valid; but while Logic is confined to the realm of what is valid in reasoning, Ethics is occupied with what is valid in action. There is, indeed, a logic of life; and in so far as all true conduct must have a rational element in it and be guided by certain intelligible forms, Ethics may be described as a kind of logic of character.

2. The connection between Ethics and *Æsthetics* is closer. Æsthetics is the science of the laws of beauty, while Ethics is the science of the laws of the good. But in so far as Æsthetics deals with the emotions rather than the reason it comes into contact with Ethics in the psychological field. In its narrower sense Æsthetics deals with beauty merely in an impersonal way; and its immediate object is not what is morally beautiful, but rather that which is beautiful in itself irrespective of moral considerations. Ethics, on the other hand, is concerned with personal worth as expressed in perfection of will and action. Conduct may be beautiful and character may afford Æsthetic satisfaction, but Ethics, in so far as it is concerned with judgments of virtue, is independent of all thought of the mere beauty or utility of conduct. Æsthetic consideration may indeed aid practical morality, but it is not identical with it. It is conceivable that what is right may not be immediately beautiful, and may indeed in its pursuit or realisation involve action which contradicts our ideas of beauty. But though both sciences have different aims they are occupied largely with the same emotions, and are connected by a common idealising purpose. In the deepest sense, what is good is beautiful and what is beautiful is good; and

ultimately, in the moral and spiritual life, goodness and beauty coincide. Indeed, so close is the connection between the two conceptions that the Greeks used the same word, τὸ καλόν, to express beauty of form and nobility of character. And even in modern times the expression 'a beautiful soul,' indicates the intimate relation between inner excellence of life and outward attractiveness. Both Æsthetics and Ethics have regard to that symmetry or proportion of life which fulfils our ideas at once of goodness and of beauty. In this sense Schiller sought to remove the sharpness of Kant's moral theory by claiming a place in the moral life for beauty. Our actions are, indeed, good when we do our duty because we ought, but they are beautiful when we do it because we cannot do otherwise, because they have become our second nature. The purpose of all culture, says Schiller, is to harmonise reason and sense, and thus to fulfil the idea of a perfect manhood.[1]

> 'When I dared question: "It is beautiful,
> But is it true?" Thy answer was, "In truth lives
> beauty."'[2]

3. *Politics* is still more closely related to Ethics, and indeed Ethics may be said to comprehend Politics. Both deal with human action and institution, and cover largely the same field. For man is not merely an individual, but is a part of a social organism. We cannot consider the virtues of the individual life without also considering the society to which he is related, and the interaction of the whole and its part. Politics is usually defined as the science of government, which of course, involves all the institutions and laws affecting men's relations to each other. But while Politics is strictly concerned only with the outward condition of the state's well-being and the external order of

[1] Schiller, *Über Anmuth und Würde.* Cf. also Ruskin, *Mod. Painters*, vol. ii.; Seeley, *Natural Religion*, and Inge, *Faith and its Psychology*, p. 203 ff. See also Bosanquet, *Hist. of Aesthetic.* We are indebted to *Romanticism*, and especially to Novalis in Germany and Cousin in France for the thought that the good and the beautiful meet and amalgamate in God.

[2] Browning.

the community, Ethics seeks the internal good or virtue of mankind, and is occupied with an ideal society in which each individual shall be able to realise the true aim and meaning of life. But after all, as Aristotle said, Politics is really a branch of Ethics, and both are inseparable from, and complementary of each other. On the one hand, Ethics cannot ignore the material conditions of human welfare nor minimise the economic forces which shape society and make possible the moral aims of man. On the other hand, Economics must recognise the service of ethical study, and keep in view the moral purposes of life, otherwise it is apt to limit its consideration to merely selfish and material ends.

v. While Ethics is thus closely connected with the sciences just named, there are two departments of knowledge, pre-supposed indeed in all mental studies, which in a very intimate way affect the science of Ethics. These are Metaphysics on the one hand and Psychology on the other.

1. Metaphysics is pre-supposed by all the sciences; and indeed, all our views of life, even our simplest experiences, involve metaphysical assumptions. It has been well said that the attempt to construct an ethical theory without a metaphysical basis issues not in a moral science without assumptions, but in an Ethics which becomes confused in philosophical doubts. Leslie Stephen proposes to ignore Metaphysics, and remarks that he is content 'to build upon the solid earth.' But, as has been pertinently asked, 'How does he know that the earth is solid on which he builds?' This is a question of Metaphysics.[1] The claim is frequently made by a certain class of writers, that we withdraw ourselves from all metaphysical sophistries, and betake ourselves to the guidance of commonsense. But what is this commonsense of which the ordinary man vaunts himself? It is in reality a number of vague assumptions borrowed unconsciously from old exploded theories—assertions, opinions, beliefs, accumulated, no one knows how,

[1] Cf. Newman Smyth, *Christian Ethics*, p. 3.

and accepted as settled judgments.[1] We do not escape philosophy by refusing to think. Some kind of theory of life is implied in such words, 'soul,' 'duty,' 'freedom,' 'power,' 'God,' which the unreflecting mind is daily using. It is useless to say we can dispense with philosophy, for that is simply to content ourselves with bad philosophy. 'To ignore the progress and development in the history of Philosophy,' says T. H. Green,[2] 'is not to return to the simplicity of a pre-philosophic age, but to condemn ourselves to grope in the maze of cultivated opinion, itself the confused result of these past systems of thought which we will not trouble ourselves to think out.' The aim of all philosophy, as Plato said, is just to correct the assumptions of the ordinary mind, and to grasp in their unity and cohesion the ultimate principles which the mind feels must be at the root of all reality. We have an ethical interest in determining whether there be any moral reality beneath the appearances of the world. Ethical questions, therefore, run back into Metaphysics. If we take Metaphysics in its widest sense as involving the idea of some ultimate end, to the realisation of which the whole process of the world as known to us is somehow a means, we may easily see that metaphysical inquiry, though distinct from ethical, is its necessary pre-supposition. The Being or Purpose of God, the great first cause, the world as fashioned, ordered and interpenetrated by Him, and man as conditioned by and dependent upon the Deity—are postulates of the moral life and must be accepted as a basis of all ethical study. The distinction between Ethics and Philosophy did not arise at once. In early Greek speculation, almost to the time of Aristotle, Metaphysics and Morals were not separated. And even in later times, Spinoza and to some extent Green, though they professedly treat of Ethics, hardly dissociate metaphysical from ethical considerations. Nor is that to be wondered at when men are dealing with the first principles of all being and life. Our view of God and of the

[1] See Author's *History of Philosophy*, p. 585.
[2] Introduction to Hume's *Works*.

world, our fundamental *Welt-Anschauung* cannot but determine our view of man and his moral life. In every philosophical system from Plato to Hegel, in which the universe is regarded as having a rational meaning and ultimate end, the good of human beings is conceived as identical with, or at least as included in the universal good.

2. But if a sound metaphysical basis be a necessary requisite for the adequate consideration of Ethics, *Psychology* as the science of the human soul is so vitally connected with Ethics, that the two studies may almost be treated as branches of one subject. An Ethic which takes no account of psychological assumptions would be impossible. Consciously or unconsciously every treatment of moral subjects is permeated by the view of the soul or personality of man which the writer has adopted, and his meaning of conduct will be largely determined by the theory of human freedom and responsibility with which he starts. Questions as to character and duty invariably lead to inquiries as to certain states of the agent's mind, as to the functions and possibilities of his natural capacities and powers. We cannot pronounce an action morally good or bad until we have determined the extent and limits of his faculties and have investigated the questions of disposition and purpose, of intention and motive, which lie at the root of all conduct, and without which actions are neither moral nor immoral. It is surely a mistake to say, as some do, that as logic deals with the correctness of reasoning, so Ethics deals only with the correctness of conduct, and is not directly concerned with the processes by which we come to act correctly.[1] On the contrary, merely correct action may be ethically worthless, and conduct obtains its moral value from the motives or intentions which actuate and determine it. Ethics cannot, therefore, ignore the psychological processes of feeling, desiring and willing of the acting subject. It is indeed true that in ordinary life men are frequently judged to be good or bad, according to the outward effect of their actions, and material results are often regarded as the sole

[1] Mackenzie seems to imply this view, *Ethics*, p. 25.

measure of good. But while it may be a point of difficulty in theoretic morality to determine the comparative worth and mutual relation of good affections and good actions, all surely will allow that a certain quality of disposition or motive in the agent is required to constitute an action morally good, and that it is not enough to measure virtue by its utility or its beneficial effect alone. Hence all moralists are agreed that the main object of their investigation must belong to the psychical side of human life—whether they hold that man's ultimate end is to be found in the sphere of pleasure or maintain that his well-being lies in the realisation of virtue for its own sake. The problems as to the origin and adequacy of conscience, as to the meaning and validity of voluntary action; the questions concerning motives and desires, as to the historical evolution of moral customs, and man's relation at each stage of his history to the social, political and religious institutions amid which he lives—are subjects which, though falling within the scope of Ethics, have their roots in the science of the soul. The very existence of a science of Ethics depends upon the answers which Psychology gives to such questions. If, for example, it be decided that there is in man no such faculty or organ as conscience, and that what men so designate is but a natural manifestation gradually evolved in and through the physical and social development of man: or if we deny the self-determining power of human beings and assume that what we call the freedom of the will is a delusion (or at least, in the last resort, a negligible element) and that man is but one of the many phenomena or facts of a physical universe—then we may continue, indeed, as some evolutionary and naturalistic thinkers do, to speak of a science of Ethics, but such a science will not be a study of the moral life as we understand it and have defined it.

Ethics, therefore, while dependent upon the philosophical sciences, has its own distinct content and scope. The end of life, that for which a man should live, with all its implications, forms the subject of moral inquiry. It is

concerned not merely with what a man is or actually does, but more specifically with what he should be and should do. Hence, as we have seen, the word 'ought' is the most distinctive term of Ethics involving a consideration of values and a relation of the actual and the ideal. The 'ought' of life constitutes at once the purpose, law, and reason of conduct. It proposes the three great questions involved in all ethical inquiry—whither ? how ? and why ? and determines the three great words which are constantly recurring in every ethical system—end, norm, motive. Moral good is the moral end considered as realised. The moral norm or rule impelling the will to the realisation of this end is called Duty. The moral motive considered as an acquired power of the acting will is called Virtue.[1]

[1] Cf. Haering, *Ethics of the Christian Life*, p. 9.

CHAPTER II

THE POSTULATES OF CHRISTIAN ETHICS

WE now proceed to define Christian Ethics and to investigate the particular postulates, philosophical and theological, upon which it rests.

Christian Ethics presupposes the Christian view of life as revealed in Christ, and its definition must be in harmony with the Christian ideal. The prime question of Christian Ethics is, How ought Christians to order their lives? It is therefore the science of morals as conditioned by Christian faith; and the problems it discusses are, the nature, meaning and laws of the moral life as dominated by the supreme good which has been revealed to the world in the Person and Teaching of Christ. It is based upon an historical event, and presupposes a particular development and consummation of the world.

I

The Relation of Christian to Philosophical Ethics.—Christian Ethics is a branch of general Ethics. But it is something more; it is Ethics in its richest and fullest expression—the interpretation of life which corresponds to the supreme manifestation of the divine will. For if the revelation of God in Christ is true, then that revelation is not merely *a* factor, but *the* factor, which must dominate and colour man's whole outlook and give an entirely new value to all his aims and actions. In Christianity we are confronted with the motive-power of a great Personality who has entered into the current of human history and

given a new direction to the moral life of man. Man's life at its highest can only be interpreted in the light of this supreme revelation, and can only be accounted for as the creation of the dynamic force of this unique Personality.

But while this truth gives to Christian Ethics its distinctive character and pre-eminent worth it does not throw discredit upon philosophical Ethics, nor indeed separate the two departments by any hard and fast lines. They have much in common. A large domain of conduct is covered by both. The so-called pagan virtues have their value for Christian character and are in the line of Christian virtue. Even in his natural state man is constituted for the moral life, and, as St. Paul states, is not without some knowledge of right and wrong. The moral attainments of the ancients are not to be regarded simply as 'splendid vices,' but as positive achievements of good. Duty may differ in content, but it is of the same kind under any system. Purity is purity and benevolence benevolence, whether manifested in a heathen or a Christian. While, therefore, Christian Ethics takes its point of departure from the special revelation of God and the unique disclosure of man's possibilities in Christ, it gladly accepts and freely uses the results of moral philosophy in so far as they throw light upon the fundamental facts of human nature. As a system of morals Christianity claims to be inclusive. It takes cognisance of all the data of consciousness, and assumes as its own, from whatever quarter it may come, all ascertained truth. The facts of man's natural history, the conclusions from philosophy, the manifold lights afforded by previous speculation—all are gathered up, sifted and tried by one all-authoritative measure of truth—the mind of Christ. It completes what is lacking in other systems in so far as their conclusions are based upon an incomplete survey of facts. It deals, in short, with personality in its highest ranges of moral power and spiritual consciousness and seeks to interpret life by its greatest possibilities and loftiest attainments as they are revealed in Christ.

But while Christian Ethics is at one with philosophic

Ethics in postulating a natural capacity for spiritual life, it is differentiated from all non-Christian systems by its distinctive belief in the possibility of the *re-creation of character*. Speculative Ethics prescribes only what ought ideally to be done or avoided. It takes no account of the foes of the spiritual life; nor does it consider the remedy by which character, once it is perverted or destroyed, can be restored and transformed. Christian Ethics, on the other hand, is concerned primarily with the question, By what power can a man achieve the right and do the good? It is not enough to postulate the inherent capacity of man. Experience of human nature shows that there are hostile elements which too often frustrate his natural development. Hence the practical problem which Christian Ethics has to face is, How can the spiritual ideal be made a reality? It regards man as standing in need of recovery, and it is forced to assume, that which philosophical Ethics does not recognise, a divine power by which character can be renewed. Christianity claims to be 'the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.' Christian Ethics therefore is based upon the twofold assumption that the ideal of humanity has actually been revealed in Christ, and that in Him also is the power by which man may realise this ideal.

II

The relation of Christian Ethics to Dogmatics.—Within the sphere of theology proper the two main constituents of Christian teaching are Dogmatics and Ethics, or Doctrines and Morals. Though it is convenient to regard these separately they really form a whole, and are but two aspects of one subject. It is difficult to define their limits, and to say where Dogmatics ends and Ethics begins. The distinction is sometimes expressed by saying that Dogmatics is a theoretic science, whereas Ethics is practical. It is true that Ethics stands nearer to everyday life and deals with matters of practical conduct, while Dogmatics is concerned with beliefs and treats of their origin and elucidation.

But, on the other hand, Ethics also takes cognisance of beliefs as well as actions, and is interested in judgments not less than achievements. There is a practical side of doctrine and there is a theoretic side of morals. Even the most theoretic of sciences, Metaphysics, though, as Novalis said, it bakes no bread, is not without its direct bearing upon life. Dogmatic theology when divorced from practical interest is in danger of becoming mere pedantry; and ethical inquiry, if it has no dogmatic basis, loses scientific value and sinks into a mere enumeration of duties. Nor is the common statement, that Dogmatics shows what we should believe and Ethics what we ought to do, an adequate one. Moral precepts are also objects of faith, and what we should believe involves moral requirements and presupposes a moral character. Schleiermacher has been charged with ignoring the difference between the two disciplines, but with scant justice. For, while he regards the two subjects as but different branches of Christian theology, and insists upon their intimate connection, he does not neglect their distinction. There has been a growing tendency to accentuate the difference, and recent writers such as Jacoby, Haering and Lemme, not to mention Martensen, Dorner and Wuttke, claim for Ethics a separate and independent treatment. The ultimate connection between Dogmatics and Ethics cannot be ignored without loss to both. It tends only to confusion to speak as some do of 'a creedless morality.' On the one hand, Ethics saves Dogmatics from evaporating into unsubstantial speculation, and by affording the test of workableness, keeps it upon the solid foundation of fact. On the other hand, Dogmatics supplies to Ethics its formative principles and normative standards, and preserves the moral life from degenerating into the vagaries of fanaticism or the apathy of fatalism. But while both sciences form complementary sides of theology and stand in relations of mutual service, each deals with the human consciousness in a different way. Dogmatics regards the Christian life from the standpoint of divine dependence: Ethics regards it from the stand-

point of human determination. Dogmatics deals with faith in relation to God, as the receptive organ of grace: Ethics views faith rather in relation to man, as a human activity or organ of conduct. The one shows us how our adoption into the kingdom of God is the work of divine love: the other shows how this knowledge of salvation manifests itself in love to God and man, and must be worked out through all the relationships of life.

III

We may define more particularly the relation of Ethics to Dogmatics by enumerating briefly the doctrinal postulates or assumptions with which Ethics starts.

1. Ethics assumes the Christian *idea of God*. God is for Ethics not an impersonal force, nor even simply the creator of the universe as philosophy might conceive Him.[1] Creative power is not of course denied, but it is qualified by what theology calls the 'moral attributes of God.' We do not ignore His omnipotence, but we look beyond it, to 'the love that tops the power, the Christ in God.'[2] It is not necessary here to sketch the Old Testament teaching with regard to God. It is sufficient to state that the New Testament writers, while not attempting to proclaim abstract doctrines, took over generally the Hebrew conception of the Deity as a God who was at once almighty, holy and righteous. The distinctive note which the New Testament emphasises is the Personality of God, and personality includes reason, will and love. The fact that we are His offspring, as St. Paul argues, is the basis of our true conception of God's nature. Through that which is highest in man we are enabled to discern something of His character. But it is specially in and through Jesus Christ that the distinctive character of the Divine Personality is declared. Christ reveals Him as our Father, and everywhere the New

[1] Cf. Dorner, *System der Christl. Ethik*, p. 48. See also Newman Smyth, *Christian Ethics*, p. 44.
[2] Cf. Mackintosh, *Christian Ethics*, p. 11.

Testament writers assume that men stand in the closest filial relations to him. In the fundamental conception of divine Fatherhood there are implicitly contained certain elements of ethical significance.[1] Of these may be mentioned :

(1) *The Spiritual Perfection of God.*—The Christian doctrine of God includes not only His personality, but His spiritual perfection. All that is highest and best in life is attributed to God. What we regard as having supreme moral worth is eternally realised in Him. It is this fact that prescribes man's ideal and makes it binding. 'Be ye perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect,' says Christ. Because of what God is, spiritual and moral excellence takes precedence of all other aims which can be perceived and pursued by man. Morality is the revelation of an ideal eternally existing in the divine mind. 'The belief in God,' it has been said, 'is the logical pre-supposition of an objective or absolute morality.'[2] The moral law, as the norm and goal of our life, obtains its validity and obligation for us not because it is an arbitrarily-given command, but because it is of the very character of God.

(2) *The Sovereignty of God.*—Not only the spiritual perfection but the moral sovereignty of God is pre-supposed. He is the supreme excellence on whom all things depend, and in whom they find their ultimate explanation. The world is not merely His creation, it is the expression of His mind. He is not related to the universe as an artist is related to his work, but rather as a personal being to his own mental and moral activities.[3] He is immanent in all the phenomena of nature and movements of life and thought ; and in the order and purpose of the world His character and will are manifested. The fact that the meaning and order of things are not imposed from without, but constitute their inner nature, reveals not only the completeness of His

[1] Cf. Lidgett, *The Christian Religion*, pp. 106, 485 ff., where the idea of God's nature is admirably developed.
[2] Rashdall, *The Theory of Good and Evil*, vol. ii. p. 212.
[3] Lidgett, *idem*. But see Bosanquet, *Principle of Indiv. and Value*, p. 380 ff.

sovereignty, but the purpose of it. The highest end of God, as moral and spiritual, is fulfilled by the constitution and education of spiritual beings like Himself, and in laying down the conditions which are necessary for their existence and perfecting. No definition of divine sovereignty can exclude the idea of moral freedom and the consequences bound up with it. Hence God must not only confer the gift of individual liberty, but respect it throughout the whole course of His dealings with man.

(3) *The Supremacy of Love.*—This is the highest and most distinctive feature of the divine personality. It is the sum of all the others ; as well as the special characteristic of the Fatherhood of God as revealed by Christ. ' God is love ' is the crowning statement of the Gospel and the fullest expression of the divine nature. The essential of all love is self-giving ; and the peculiarity of God's love is the communication and imparting of Himself to His creatures. The love of God finds its highest manifestation in the gift and sacrifice of His Son. He is the supreme personality in history, revealing God in and to the world. In the light of what Christ is we know what God is, and from His revelation there flows a new and ever-deepening experience of the divine Being.

2. Christian Ethics presupposes the *Christian doctrine of Sin.* It is not the province of Ethics to discuss minutely the origin of evil or propound a theory of sin. But it must see to it that the view it takes is consistent with the truths of revelation and in harmony with the facts of life. A false or inadequate conception of sin is as detrimental to Ethics as it is to Dogmatics; and upon our doctrine of evil depends very largely our interpretation of life in regard to its difficulties and purposes, its trials and triumphs. In the meantime it is enough to remark that considerable vagueness of idea and looseness of expression exist concerning this subject.

While some regard sin simply as a *defect* or shortcoming, a missing of the mark, as the Greek word ἁμαρτία implies, others treat it as a *disease*, or infirmity of the flesh—a malady affecting the physical constitution which may be

incurred by heredity or induced by environment. In both cases it is regarded as a misfortune, rather than a fault, or even as a fate from which the notion of guilt is absent. While there is an element of truth in these representations, they are defective in so far as they do not take sufficient account of the personal and determinative factor in all sinful acts. The Christian view, though not denying that physical weakness and the influence of heredity and environment do, in many cases, affect conduct, affirms that there is a personal element always present which these conditions do not explain. Sin is not merely negative. It is something positive, not so much an imperfection as a trespass. It is to be accounted for not as an inherited or inherent malady, but as a self-chosen perversity. It belongs to the spirit rather than to the body, and though it has its seat in the heart and in the emotions, it has to do principally with the will. 'Every man is tempted when he is drawn away by his own lust and enticed. Then when lust has conceived it bringeth forth sin.'[1] The essence of sin is selfishness. It is the deliberate choice of self in preference to God—personal and wilful rebellion against the known law of righteousness and truth. There are, of course, degrees of wrongdoing and undoubtedly extenuating circumstances which must be taken into account in estimating the significance and enormity of guilt, but in the last resort Christian Ethics is compelled to postulate the fact of sin, and to regard it as a personal rebellion against the holy will of God, the deliberate choice of self and the wilful perversion of the powers of man into instruments of unrighteousness.

3. A third postulate, which is a corollary of the Christian view of God and of sin, is the *Responsibility of Man*. Christian Ethics treats every man as accountable for his thoughts and actions, and therefore, as capable of choosing the good as revealed in Christ. While not denying the sovereignty of God, nor minimising the mystery of evil, Christianity firmly maintains the doctrine of human freedom. An Ethic would be impossible if, on the one side, grace were absolutely

[1] James i. 13, 14.

irresistible ; or, on the other, sin were unalterably necessitated. Whatever be the doctrine we formulate on these subjects, Ethics demands that what we call freedom be safeguarded. An interesting question emerges at this point as to the possibility, apart from a knowledge of Christ, of choosing the good. Difficult as this question is, and though it was answered by Augustine and many of the early Fathers in the negative, the modern, and probably the more just view, is that we cannot hold mankind responsible unless we allow to all men the larger freedom and judge them according to their light and opportunity. If non-Christians are fated to do evil, then no guilt can be imputed. History shows that a love of goodness has sometimes existed, and that many isolated acts of purity and kindness have been done, among people who have known nothing of the historical Christ. The New Testament recognises degrees of depravity in nations and individuals, and a measure of noble aspiration and honest endeavour in ordinary human nature. St. Paul plainly assumes some knowledge and performance on the part of the heathen, and though he denounces their immorality in unsparing terms, he does not affirm that pagan society was so corrupt that it had lost all knowledge of moral good.

IV

Before concluding this chapter some remarks regarding the authority and method of Christian Ethics may be not inappropriate.

1. Christian Ethics is not directly concerned with critical questions as to the genuineness and authenticity of the New Testament writings. It is sufficient for its purpose that these have been generally received by the Church, and that they present in the Person of Christ the highest embodiment of the law and spirit of the moral life. The writings of the New Testament thus become ethically normative in virtue of their direct reflection of the mind of Christ and their special receptivity of His spirit. Their

authority, therefore, is Christ's own authority, and has a value for us as His word is reproduced by them. It does not detract from the validity of the New Testament as the reflection of the spirit of Christ that there are discernible in it distinct signs of development of doctrine, a manifest growth in clearness and depth of insight and knowledge of the mind of Jesus. Such evidences of advancement are specially noticeable in the application of Christian principles to the practical problems of life, such as the questions of slavery, marriage, work and property. St. Paul does not disclaim the possibility of development, and he associates himself with those who know in part and wait for fuller light. In common with all Christians, Paul was doubtless conscious of a growing enrichment in spiritual knowledge; and his later epistles show that he had reached to clearer prospects of Christ and His redemption, and had obtained a fuller grasp of the world-wide significance of the Gospel than when he first began to preach.

One cannot forget that the battle of criticism is raging to-day around the inner citadel—the very person and words of Jesus. If it can be shown that the Gospels contain only very imperfect records of the historical Jesus, and that very few sayings of our Lord can be definitely pronounced genuine, then, indeed, we might have to give up some of the particular passages upon which we have based our conception of truth and duty, but nothing less than a wholesale denial of the historical existence of Jesus [1] would demand of us a repudiation of the Christian view of life. The ideals, motives, and sentiments—the entire outlook and spirit of life which we associate with Christ—are now a positive possession of the Christian consciousness. There is a Christian view of the world, a Christian *Welt-Anschauung*, so living and real in the heart of Christendom that even though we had no more reliable basis than the 'Nine Foundation Pillars' which Schmiedel condescends to leave us, we should not be wholly deprived of the fundamental principles upon which the Christian life might be reared.

[1] As, for example, that of Drew's *Christus Myth*.

If to these we add the list of 'doubly attested sayings' collected by Burkitt,[1] which even some of the most negative critics have been constrained to allow, we should at least have a starting-point for the study of the teaching of Jesus. The most reputable scholars, however, of Germany, America and Britain acknowledge that no reasonable doubt can be cast upon the general substance and tone of the Synoptic Gospels, compiled, as they were, from the ancient Gospel of Mark and the source commonly called 'Q' (*i.e.* the lost common origin of the non-Markian portions of Matthew and Luke). To these we should be disposed to add the Fourth Gospel, which, though a less primary source, undoubtedly records acts and sayings of our Lord attested by one, who (whosoever he was) was in close touch with his Master's life, and had drunk deeply of His spirit.

In the general tone and trend of these writings we find abundant materials for what may be called the Ethics of Jesus. It is true, no sharp line can be drawn between His religious and moral teaching. But, taking Ethics in its general sense, as the discussion of the ideals, virtues, duties of man, the relation of man to God and to his fellow-men, it will at once be seen that a very large portion of Christ's teaching is distinctly ethical. The facts of His own earthly existence, all His great miracles, His parables, and above all, the Sermon on the Mount, have an immediate bearing upon human conduct. They all deal with character, and are chiefly illustrations and enforcements of the divine ideal of life and of the value of man as a child of God which He came to reveal. In the example of Jesus Himself we have the best possible illustration of the translation of principles into life. And in so far as we find our highest good embodied in Him, He becomes for us, as J. S. Mill acknowledged, a kind of personified conscience. No abstract statement of ethical principles can possibly influence life so powerfully as the personal incarnation of these principles; and if the greatest means to the true life is personal association with the high and noble, then it need not seem strange

[1] Cf. *Gospel History and its Transmission.*

that love and admiration for the person of Christ have as a matter of fact proved the mightiest of historical motives to noble living.

However imperfectly we may know the person of Jesus, and however fragmentary may be the record of His teaching, one great truth looms out of the darkness—the peerlessness of His character and the incomparableness of His ideal of life. He comes to us with a message of Good, new to man, based on the great conviction of the Fatherhood of God. The all-dominating faith that a genuine seeking love is at the heart of the universe makes Jesus certain that the laws of the world are the laws of a loving God—laws of life which must be studied, welcomed, and heartily obeyed.

2. The Christian ideal, though given in Christ, has to be examined, analysed, and applied by the very same faculties as are employed in dealing with speculative problems. All science must be furnished with facts, and its task generally is to shape its materials to definite ends. The scientist does not invent. He does not create. He simply *dis*covers what is already there: he only moulds into form what is given. In like manner, the Christian moralist deals with the revelation of life which has been granted to him partly in the human consciousness, and partly through the sacred scriptures. The scriptures, however, do not offer a systematic presentation of the life of Christ, or a formal directory of moral conduct. The data are supplied, but these data require to be interpreted and unified so as to form a system of Ethics. The authority to which Christian Ethics appeals is not an external oracle which imposes its dictates in a mechanical way. It is an authority embodied in intelligible forms, and appealing to the rational faculties of man. Christian Ethics, though deduced from scripture, is not a cut and dry code of rules prescribed by God which man must blindly obey. It has to be thought out, and intelligently applied to all the circumstances of life. According to the Protestant view, at least, Ethics is not a stereotyped compendium of precepts which

the Church supplies to its members to save them from thinking. Slavish imitation is wholly foreign to the genius of the Gospel. Christ Himself appeals everywhere to the rational nature of man, and His words are life and spirit only as they are intelligibly apprehended and become by inner conviction the principles of action.

Authoritative, then, as the scriptures are, and containing as they do the revelation of an unique historical fact, they do not present a closed or final system of truth. Christ has yet many things to say unto us, and the Holy Spirit is continually adding new facts to human experience, and disclosing richer and fuller manifestations of God through history and providence and the personal consciousness of man. No progress in thought or life can indeed be made which is inconsistent with, or foreign to, the fundamental facts which centre in Christ: and we may be justly suspicious of all advancement in doctrine or morals which does not flow from the initial truths of the Master's life and teaching. But, just as progress has been made, both in the increase of materials of knowledge and in regard to the clearer insight and appreciation of the meaning of Christian truth, since the apostles' age, so we may hope that, as the ages go on, we shall acquire a still fuller conception of the kingdom of God and a richer apprehension of the divine will. The task and method of Christian Ethics will be, consequently, the intelligent interpretation and the gradual application to human life and society, in all their relationships, of the mind of Christ under the constant illumination and guidance of the Divine Spirit.

CHAPTER III

ETHICAL THOUGHT BEFORE CHRIST

APART from the writings of the New Testament, which are the primary source of Christian Ethics, a comprehensive view of our subject would include some account of the ethical conceptions of Greece, Rome and Israel, which were at least contributory to the Christian idea of the moral life. Whatever view we take of its origin, Christianity did not come into the world like the goddess Athene, without preparation, but was the product of many factors. The moral problems of to-day cannot be rightly appreciated except in the light of certain concepts which come to us from ancient thought; and Greco-Roman philosophy as well as Hebrew religion have contributed not a little to the form and trend of modern ethical inquiry.

All we can attempt is the briefest outline, first, of the successive epochs of Greek and Roman Ethics; and second, of the leading moral ideas of the Hebrews as indicating the preparatory stages in the evolution of thought which finds its completion in the Ethics of Christianity.

I

Before the golden age of Greek philosophy there was no Ethics in the strictest sense. Philosophy proper occupied itself primarily with ontological questions—questions as to the origin and constitution of the material world. It was only when mythology and religion had lost their hold upon the cultured, and the traditions of the poets had come to be doubted, that inquiries as to the meaning of life and conduct arose.

The Sophists may be regarded as the pioneers of ethical science. This body of professional teachers, who appeared about the fifth century in Greece, drew attention to the vagueness of common opinion and began to teach the art of conduct. Of these Protagoras is the most famous, and to him is attributed the saying, 'Man is the measure of all things.' As applied to conduct, this dictum is commonly interpreted as meaning that good is entirely subjective, relative to the individual. Viewed in this light the saying is one-sided and sceptical, subversive of all objective morality. But the dictum may be regarded as expressing an important truth, that the good is personal and must ultimately be the good for man as man, therefore for all men.

1. It was *Socrates*, however, who, as it was said, first called philosophy from heaven to the sphere of this earth, and diverted men's minds from the consideration of natural things to the affairs of human life. He was indeed the first moral philosopher, inasmuch as that, while the Sophists merely talked at large about justice and virtue, he asked what these terms really meant. Living in an age when the old guides of life—law and custom—were losing their hold upon men, he was compelled to find a substitute for them by reflection upon the meaning and object of existence. For him the source of evil is want of thought, and his aim is to awaken men to the realisation of what they are, and what they must seek if they would make the best of their lives. He is the prophet of clear self-consciousness. 'Know thyself' is his motto, and he maintains that all virtue must be founded on such knowledge. A life without reflection upon the meaning of existence is unworthy of a man.[1] Hence the famous Socratic dictum, 'Virtue is knowledge.' Both negatively and positively Socrates held this principle to be true. For, on the one hand, he who is not conscious of the good and does not know in what it consists, cannot possibly pursue it. And, on the other hand, if a man is once alive to his real good, how can he do otherwise than pursue it? No one therefore does

[1] *Apologia*, pp. 38-9.

wrong willingly. Let a man know what is right, and he will do it. Knowledge of virtue is not, however, distinct from self-interest. Every one naturally seeks the good simply because he sees that the good is identical with his ultimate happiness. The wise man is the happy man. Hence to know oneself is the secret of well-being. Let each be master of himself, knowing what he seeks, and seeking what he knows—that, for Socrates, is the first principle of Ethics, the condition of all moral life. This view is obviously one-sided and essentially individualistic, excluding all those forms of morality which are pursued unconsciously, and are due more to the influence of intuitive perception and social habit than to clear and definite knowledge. The merit of Socrates, however, lies in his demand for ethical reflection, and his insistence upon man not only acting rightly, but acting from the right motive.

2. While Socrates was the first to direct attention to the nature of virtue, it received from *Plato* a more systematic treatment. Platonic philosophy may be described as an extension to the universe of the principles which Socrates applied to the life of the individual. Plato attempts to define the end of man by his place in the cosmos; and by bringing Ethics into connection with Metaphysics he asks What is the idea of man as a part of universal reality? Two main influences combined to produce his conception of virtue. First, in opposition to the Heraclitean doctrine of perpetual change, he contended for something real and permanent. Second, in antagonism to the Sophistic theory of the conventional origin of the moral law, he maintained that man's chief end was the good which was fixed in the eternal nature of things, and did not consist in the pursuit of transient pleasures. Hence, in two respects, Plato goes beyond Socrates. He puts opinion, which is his name for ordinary consciousness, between ignorance and knowledge, ascribing to it a certain measure of truth, and making it the starting-point for reflection. And further, he transforms the Socratic idea of morality, rejecting the notion that its principle is to be found in a mere calculation of pleasures,

and maintaining that particular goods must be estimated by the good of life as a whole. Plato's philosophy rests upon his doctrine of ideas, which, as the types of permanent reality, represent the eternal nature of things; and the problem of life is to rise from opinion to truth, from appearance to reality, and attain to the ideal principle of unity. The highest good Plato identifies with God, and man's end is ultimately to be found in the knowledge of, and communion with, the eternal.

The human soul he conceived to be a mixture of two elements. In virtue of its higher spiritual nature it participates in the world of ideas, the life of God: and in virtue of its lower or animal impulses, in the corporeal world of decay. These two dissimilar parts are connected by an intermediate element called by Plato *θυμός* or courage, implying the emotions or affections of the heart. Hence a threefold constitution of the soul is conceived—the rational powers, the emotional desires, and the animal passions. If we ask who is the good man? Plato answers, it is the man in whom these three elements are harmonised. On the basis of this psychology Plato classifies and determines the virtues—adopting the four cardinal virtues of Greek tradition as the fundamental types of morality. Wisdom is the quality, or condition of all virtue and the crown of the moral life: courage is the virtue of the emotional part of man; temperance or moderation, the virtue of the lower appetites: while justice is the unity and the principle of the others. Virtue is thus no longer identified with knowledge simply. Another source of vice besides ignorance is assumed, viz., the disorder and conflict of the soul; and the well-being of man lies in the attainment of a well-ordered and harmonious life. As health is the harmony of the body, so virtue is the harmony of the soul—a condition of perfection in which every desire is kept in control and every function performs its part with a view to the good of the whole. Morality, however, does not belong merely to the individual, but has its perfect realisation in the state in which the three elements of the soul have their counter-

part in the threefold rank of society. Man is indeed but a type of a larger cosmos, and it is not as an individual but as a citizen that he finds his station and duties, and is capable of realising his true life.

Thus we see how Plato is led to correct the shortcomings of Socrates—his abrupt distinction between ignorance and knowledge, his vagueness as to the meaning of the good, and his tendency to emphasise the subjective side of virtue and withdraw the individual from the community of which he is essentially a part. But in developing his theory of ideas Plato has represented the true life of man as consisting in the knowledge of, and indeed in absorption in, God, a state to which man can only attain by the suppression of his natural impulses and withdrawal from earthly life: and though there is not wanting in Plato's later teaching the higher conception of the transformation of the animal passions, he is not wholly successful in overcoming the dualism between impulse and reason which besets some of the earlier dialogues.

It is a striking proof of the vitality of Plato that his teaching has affected every form of idealism and has helped to shape the history of religious thought in all ages. Not only many of the early Fathers, such as Clement and Origen, but the Neo-Platonists of Alexandria, the Cambridge Platonists of the seventeenth century, and also the German theologians, Baur and Schleiermacher, have recognised numerous coincidences between Christianity and Platonism: as Bishop Westcott has said, 'Plato points to St. John.'[1] His influence may be detected in some of the greatest Christian poetry of our own country, especially in that of Wordsworth and Tennyson. For Plato believes, in common with the greatest of every age, in 'that inborn passion for perfection,' that innate though often unconscious yearning after the true, the beautiful, the good,

> 'Those obstinate questionings
> Of sense and outward things,'

which are the heritage of human nature.

[1] Cf. Adam, *Vitality of Platonism*, p. 8.

3. The Ethics of *Aristotle* does not essentially differ from that of Plato. He is the first to treat of morals formally as a science, which, however, in his hands becomes a division of politics. Man, says Aristotle, is really a social animal. Even more decisively than Plato, therefore, he treats man as a part of society. While in Plato there is the foreshadowing of the truth that the goal of moral endeavour lies in godlikeness, with Aristotle the goal is confined to this life and is conceived simply as the earthly well-being of the moral subject. 'Death,' he declares, 'is the greatest of all evils, for it is the end.' Aristotle begins his great work on Ethics with the discussion of the chief good, which he declares to be happiness or well-being. But happiness does not consist in sensual pleasure, nor even in the pursuit of honour, but in an 'activity of the soul in accordance with reason.'[1] There are required for this life of right thinking and right doing not only suitable environment but proper instruction. Virtue is not virtuous until it is a habit, and the only way to be virtuous is to practise virtue. To be virtuous a man's conduct must be a law for him, the regular expression of his will. Hence the virtues are habits of deliberate choice, and not natural endowments. Following Plato, Aristotle sees that there is in man a number of impulses struggling for the mastery of the soul, hence he is led to assume that the natural instincts need guidance and control. Moderation is therefore the one chief virtue; and moral excellence consists in an activity which at every point seeks to strike a 'mean' between two opposite excesses. Virtue in general, then, may be defined as the observation of the due mean in action. Aristotle also follows Plato in assigning the ideal good to contemplation, and in exalting the life of reason and speculation above all others. In thus idealising the contemplative life he was but reflecting the spirit of his race. This apotheosis of knowledge infected all Greek thought, and found exaggerated expression in the religious absorption of Neo-Platonism.

[1] *Nic. Ethics*, bk. i. chap. 5.

Without dwelling further upon the ethical philosophy of Aristotle, a defect which at once strikes a modern in regard to his scheme of virtues is that benevolence is not recognised, except obscurely as a form of magnanimity; and that, in general, the gentler virtues, so prominent in Christianity, have little place in the list. The virtues are chiefly aristocratic. Favourable conditions are needed for their cultivation. They are not possible for a slave, and hardly for those engaged in 'mercenary occupations.'[1] Further, it may be remarked that habit of itself does not make a man virtuous. Morality cannot consist in a mere succession of customary acts. 'One good custom would corrupt the world,' and habit is frequently a hindrance rather than a help to the moral life. But the main defect of Aristotle's treatment of virtue is that he tends to regard the passions as irrational, and he does not see that passions if wholly evil could have no 'mean.' Reason pervades all the lower appetites of man: and the instincts and desires, instead of being treated as elements which must be suppressed, ought to be regarded rather as powers to be transformed and employed as vehicles of the moral life. At the same time there are not wanting passages in Aristotle as well as in Plato which, instead of emphasising the avoidance of excess, regard virtue as consisting in complementary elements—the addition of one virtuous characteristic to another—'that balance of contrasted qualities which meets us at every turn in the distinguished personalities of the Hellenic race, and which is too often thought of in a merely negative way, as the avoidance of excess rather than as the highest outcome of an intense and many-sided vitality.'[2]

4. After Aristotle philosophy rapidly declined, and Ethics degenerated into popular moralising which manifested itself chiefly in a growing depreciation of good as the end

[1] μισθαρνικαὶ ἐργασίαι, Arist., *Politics*, iii. 'There is nothing common between a master and his slave,' *Nic. Ethics*, viii.

[2] Butcher, *Harvard Lectures on Greek Subjects*, quoted by Barbour, *Philos. Study of Christian Ethics*, p. 11. Cf. also Burnet, *Ethics of Aristotle*, p. 73. 'The "mean" is really the true nature of the soul when fully developed.'

of life. The conflicting elements of reason and impulse, which neither Plato nor Aristotle succeeded in harmonising, gave rise ultimately to two opposite interpretations of the moral life. The *Stoics* selected the rational nature as the true guide to an ethical system, but they gave to it a supremacy so rigid as to threaten the extinction of the affections. The *Epicureans*, on the other hand, fastening upon the emotions as the measure of truth, emphasised the happiness of the individual as the chief good—a doctrine which led some of the followers of Epicurus to justify even sensual enjoyment. It is not necessary to dwell upon the details of Epicureanism, for though its description of the 'wise man,' as that of a person who prudently steered a middle course between passion and asceticism, was one which exercised considerable influence upon the morals of the age, it is the doctrines of Stoicism which more especially have come into contact with Christianity. Without discussing the Stoic conception of the world as interpenetrated and controlled by an inherent spirit, and the consequent view of life as proceeding from God and being in all its parts equally divine, we may note that the Stoics, under the influence of Platonism, regarded self-realisation as the true end of man. This idea they expressed in the formula, 'Life according to nature.' The wise man is he who seeks to live in all the circumstances of life in agreement with his rational nature. The law of nature is to avoid what is hurtful and strive for what is appropriate. Pleasure, though not the immediate object of man, arises as an accompaniment of a well-ordered life. Pleasure and pain are, however, really accidents, to be met by the wise man with indifference. He alone is free who acknowledges the absolute supremacy of reason and makes himself independent of earthly desires. This life of freedom is open to all: since all men are members of one body. The slave may be as free as the consul, and in every station of life each may make the world serve him by living in harmony with it.

There is a certain sublimity in the ethics of Stoicism which has always appealed to noble minds. 'It inspired,'

says Mr. Lecky, 'nearly all the great characters of the early Roman Empire, and nerved every attempt to maintain the dignity and freedom of the human soul.'[1] But we cannot close our eyes to its defects. Divine providence, though frequently dwelt upon, signified little more for the Stoic than destiny or fate. Harmony with nature was simply a sense of proud self-sufficiency. Stoicism is the glorification of reason, even to the extent of suppressing all emotion. Sin is unreason, and salvation lies in an external control of the passions—in indifference and apathy begotten of the subordination of desire to reason.

The chief merit of Stoicism is that in an age of moral degeneracy it insisted upon the necessity of integrity in all the conditions of life. In its preference for the joys of the inner life and its scorn of the delights of sense; in its emphasis upon individual responsibility and duty; above all, in its advocacy of a common humanity and its belief in the relation of each human soul to God, Roman Stoicism, as revealed in the writings of a Seneca, an Epictetus, and a Marcus Aurelius, not only showed how high Paganism at its best could reach, but proved in a measure a preparation for Christianity, with whose practical truths it had much in common.

The affinities between Stoicism and Paulinism have been frequently pointed out, and the similarity in language and thought can scarcely be accounted for by coincidence. There are, however, elements in Stoicism which St. Paul would never have dreamt of assimilating. The material conception of the world, the self-conscious pride, the absence of all sense of sin, the temper of apathy, and unnatural suppression of feelings were ideas which could not but rouse the apostle's strongest antagonism. But, on the other hand, there were characteristics of a nobler order in Stoic morality which, we may well believe, Paul found ready to his hand and did not hesitate to incorporate in his teaching. Of these we may mention, the Immanence of God, the idea of Wisdom, the conception of freedom as

[1] *Hist. of Europ. Morals*, vol. i. chap. ii.

the prerogative of the individual, and the notion of brotherhood as the goal of humanity.[1]

The Roman Stoics, notwithstanding their theoretic interest in moral questions, lived in an ideal world, and hardly attempted to bring their views into connection with the facts of life. Their philosophy was a refuge from the evil around them rather than an effort to remove it. They seek to overcome the world by being indifferent to it. In Neo-Platonism—the last of the Greek schools of philosophy—this tendency to withdraw from life and its problems becomes still more marked. Absorption in God is the goal of existence and the essence of religion. 'Man is left alone with God without any world to mediate between them, and in the ecstatic vision of the Absolute the light of reason is extinguished.'[2]

Meagre as our sketch of ancient thought has necessarily been, it is perhaps enough to show that the debt of religion to Greek and Roman Ethics is incalculable. It lifted man above vague wonder, and gave him courage to define his relation to existence. It caused him to ask questions of experience, and awakened him to the value of life and the meaning of freedom, duty, and good. Finally, it brought into view those contrasted aims of life and society which find their solution in the Christian ideal.[3]

II

Christianity stands in the closest relation with *Hebrew religion*. Much as the philosophy of Greece and Rome have contributed to Christendom, there is no such intimate relation between them as that which connects Christian Ethics with the morality of Israel. Christ Himself, and still more the Apostle Paul, assumed as a substratum of

[1] See Author's *Ethics of St. Paul* for further discussion of relation of Paul to Stoics.

[2] Cf. E. Caird, *Evolution of Theology in the Greek Philosophers*, vol. i. p. 48.

[3] Cf. Caird, *idem*. Pfleiderer, *Vorbereitung des Christentums in der Griech. Philos.*; Wenley, *Preparation for Christianity*.

their teaching the revelation which had been granted to the Jews. The moral and religious doctrines comprehended under the designation of the 'law' served, as the apostle said, as a παιδαγωγός or usher whose function it was to lead them to the school of Christ.

At the outset we are impressed by the fact that the Ethics of Judæism was inseparable from its religion. Moral obligations were conceived as divine commands, and the moral law as a revelation of the divine will. At first Jehovah was simply a tribal deity, but gradually this restricted view gave place to the wider conception of God as the sovereign of all men. The divine commandment is the criterion and measure of man's obedience. Evil, while it has its source and head in a hostile but subsidiary power, consists in violation of Jehovah's will.

There are three main channels of Hebrew revelation, commonly known as the *Law*, the *Prophecy*, and *Poetry* of Old Testament.

1. Law

(1) *The Mosaic Legislation* centering in the Decalogue [1] is the first stage of Old Testament Ethic. The ten commandments, whether derived from Mosaic enactment or representing a later summary of duty, hold a supreme and formative place in the teaching of the Old Testament. All, not even excepting the fourth, are purely moral requirements. They are, however, largely negative; the fifth commandment only rising to positive duty. They are also merely external, regulative of outward conduct. The sixth and seventh protect the rights of persons, while the eighth guards outward property. Though these laws may be shown to have their roots in the moral consciousness of mankind, they were at first restricted by Israel in their scope and practice to its own tribes.

(2) *The Civil laws* present a second factor in the ethical education of Israel. The 'Book of the Covenant' [2] reveals a certain advancement in political legislation. Still the

[1] Exod. xx.; Deut. v. [2] Ex. xx.-xxiii.

hard and legal enactments of retaliation—'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth'—disclose a barbarous conception of right. Alongside of these primitive laws must be set those of a more humane nature—laws with regard to release, the permission of gleaning, the privileges of the year of jubilee.

(3) *The Ceremonial laws* embody a third element in the moral life of Israel. These had to do chiefly with commands and prohibitions relative to personal conduct—'Meats and drinks and diverse washings'; and with sacrifices and forms of ritual worship.[1]

With regard to the moral value of the commandments two opposite errors are to be avoided. We must not refuse to recognise in the Old Testament the record of a true, if elementary and imperfect, revelation of God. But also we must beware of exalting the commandments of the Old Dispensation to the level of those of the New; and thus misunderstanding the nature and relation of both.

The Christian faith is in a sense the development of Judæism, though it is infinitely more. The commandments of Moses, in so far as they have their roots in the constitution of man, have not been superseded, but taken up and spiritualised by the Ethic of the Gospel.

2. Prophecy

The dominant factor of Old Testament Ethics lay in the influence exerted by the prophets. They, and not the priests, are the great moralists of Israel. The prophets were speakers for God, the interpreters of His will. They were the moral guides of the people, the champions of integrity in political life, not less than witnesses for individual purity.[2]

We may sum up the ethical significance of the Hebrew prophets in three features.

(1) They were preachers of *personal righteousness*. In

[1] Amos v. 25; Hos. vi. 6; Isa. i. 11-13.
[2] Cf. Wallace, *Lectures and Essays on Natural Theol. and Ethics*, p. 183.

times of falsehood and hypocrisy they were witnesses for integrity and truth, upholding the personal virtues of justice, sincerity, and mercy against the idolatry and formalism of the priesthood. 'What doth the Lord require of thee,' said Micah, 'but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.'[1] In the same strain Isaiah exclaimed, 'Bring no more vain oblations, but wash you and make you clean.'[2] And so also Habakkuk has affirmed in words which became the keynote of Paul's theology and the watchword of the Reformation—'The just shall live by faith.'[3]

(2) They were the advocates of the *rights of man*, of equity and justice between man and man. They denounce the tyranny of kings, and the luxury of the nobles. They protest against the oppression of the poor and befriend the toilers of the cities. They proclaim the worth of man as man. They reveal Jehovah as the God of the common people, and seek to mitigate the burdens which lie upon the enslaved and down-trodden.

(3) They were the apostles of *Hope*. Not only did they seek to lift their fellow-men above their present calamities, but they proclaimed a message of peace and triumph which was to be evolved out of trouble. A great promise gradually loomed on the horizon, and hope began to centre in an anointed Deliverer. The Hebrew prophets were not probably conscious of the full significance of their own predictions. Like all true poets, they uttered greater things than they knew. The prophet who most clearly outlines this truth is the second Isaiah. As he looks down the ages he sees that healing is to be brought about through suffering, the suffering of a Sinless one. Upon this mysterious figure who is to rise up in the latter days is to be laid the burden of humanity. No other, not even St. Paul himself, has grasped so clearly the great secret of atonement or given so touching a picture of the power of vicarious suffering as this unknown prophet of Israel.

[1] Micah vi. 8. [2] Isa. i. 13-17; Micah vi. 7.
[3] Hab. ii. 4; cf. Rom. i. 17; Gal. iii. 2.

3. The Poetical Books

Passing from the prophets to the poets of Israel—and especially to the book of Psalms—the devotional manual of the people, reflecting the moral and religious life of the nation at the various stages of its development—we find the same exalted character of God as a God of Righteousness, hating evil and jealous for devotion, the same profound sense of sin and the same high vocation of man. The Hebrew nation was essentially a poetic people,[1] and their literature is full of poetry. But poetry is not systematic. It is not safe, therefore, to deduce particular tenets of faith or moral principles from passages which glow with intensity of feeling. But if a nation's character is revealed in its songs, the deep spirituality and high moral tone of Israel are clearly reflected in that body of religious poetry which extends over a period of a thousand years, from David to the Maccabean age. It is at once national and personal, and is a wonderful record of the human heart in its various moods and yearnings. Underlying all true poetry there is a philosophy of life. God, for the Hebrew psalmist, is the one pervading presence. He is not a mere impersonation of the powers of nature, but a personal Being, righteous and merciful, with whom man stands in the closest relations. Holy and awful, indeed, hating iniquity and exacting punishment upon the wicked, He is also tender and pitiful—a Father of the oppressed, who bears their burdens, forgives their iniquities, and crowns them with tender mercy.[2] All nature speaks to the Hebrew of God. He is no far-off creator, but immanent in all His works.[3] He presides over mankind, and provides for the manifold wants of his creatures. It is this thought which gives unity to the nation, and binds the tribes into a common brotherhood. God is their personal friend. In war and peace, in worship and labour, at home and in exile, it is to Jehovah they look

[1] Though Houston Chamberlain, in his recent work, *The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*, maintains that they were 'a most prosaic, materialistic people, without any real sense of poetry.'

[2] Ps. 51. [3] Ps. 19.

for strength and light and joy. He is their Shepherd and Redeemer, under whose wings they trust. Corresponding to this sublime faith, the virtues of obedience and fidelity are dwelt upon, while the ideal of personal righteousness and purity is constantly held forth. It is no doubt largely temporal blessings which the psalmists emphasise, and the rewards of integrity are chiefly those of material and earthly prosperity. The hope of the future life is nowhere clearly expressed in the Old Testament, and while in the Psalter here and there a dim yearning for a future with God breaks forth, hardly any of these poems illumine the destiny of man beyond the grave. The hope of Israel was limited mostly to this earth. The land beyond the shadows does not come within their purview. Like a child, the psalmist is content to know that his divine Father is near him here and now. When exactly the larger hope emerged we cannot say. But gradually, with the breaking up of the national life and under the pressure of suffering, a clearer vision dawned. With the limitations named, it is a sublime outlook upon life and a high-toned morality which the Psalter discloses. Poetry, indeed, idealises, and no doubt the Israelites did not always live up to their aspirations; but men who could give utterance to a faith so clear, to a penitence so deep, and to longings so lofty and spiritual as these Psalms contain are not the least among the heralds of the kingdom of Christ.

We cannot enlarge upon the ethical ideas of the other writings of the Old Testament, the books of Wisdom, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Job. Their teaching, while not particularly lofty, is generally healthy and practical, consisting of homely commonplaces and shrewd observations upon life and conduct. The motives appealed to are not always the highest, and frequently have regard only to earthly prosperity and worldly policy. It must not, however, be overlooked that moral practice is usually allied with the fear of God, and the right choice of wisdom is represented as the dictate of piety not less than the sanction of prudence. The writers of the Wisdom literature are the

humanists of their age. As distinguished from the idealism of the prophets, they are realists who look at life in a somewhat utilitarian way. With the prophets, however, they are at one in regarding the inferiority of ceremonial to obedience and sincerity. God is the ruler of the world, and man's task is to live in obedience to Him. What God requires is correct outward behaviour, self-restraint, and consideration of others.

In estimating the Ethics of Israel the fact that it was a preparatory stage in the revelation of God's will must not be overlooked. We are not surprised, therefore, that, judged by the absolute standard of the New Testament, the morality of the Old Testament must be pronounced imperfect. In two respects at least, in intent and extent, it is deficient.

(1) It is lacking in *Depth*. There is a tendency to dwell upon the sufficiency of external acts rather than the necessity of inward disposition. At the same time, in the Psalter and prophecy inward purity is recognised.[1] Further, the character of Jehovah is sometimes presented in a repellent aspect; as in the threatenings of the second commandment; the treatment of the children of Achan and the Sons of Korah; the seeming injustice of God, implied in the complaint of Moses, and the protests of Abraham and David. But again there are not wanting more kindly features of the Divine Being; and the Fatherhood of God finds frequent expression. Though the penal code is severe, a gentler spirit shines through many of its provisions, and protection is afforded to the wage-earner, the dependent, and the poor; while the care of slaves, foreigners, and even lower animals is not overlooked.[2] Again, it has been noticed that the motives to which the Old Testament appeals are often mercenary. Material prosperity plays an important part as an inducement to well-doing. The good which the pious patriarch or royal potentate contemplates is something which is calculated to enrich himself or advance his people. But here we must not forget that

[1] Ps. 51; Isa. 1.
[2] Deut. xxiv. 14, 15; Jer. xxii. 13-17; Matt. iii. 5; Deut. xxv. 4.

God's revelation is progressive, and His dealing with man educative. There is naturally a certain accommodation of the divine law to the various stages of the moral apprehension of the Jewish people. Gradually the nation is being carried forward by the promise of material benefits to the deeper and more inward appreciation of spiritual blessings.

(2) It is lacking in *Scope*. In regard to universality the Hebrew ideal, it must be acknowledged, is deficient. God is usually represented as the God of Israel alone, and not as the God of all men, and the obligations of veracity, honesty, and mercy are confined within the limits of the nation. It is true that a prominent commandment given to Israel and endorsed by our Lord runs thus: 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.'[1] But the extent of the obligation seems to be restricted by the context: 'Thou shalt not avenge nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people.' It is contended that the word translated 'neighbour' bears a wider import than the English term, and is really applicable to any person. The larger idea is expressed in vv. 33, 34, where the word 'stranger' or 'foreigner' is substituted for neighbour. And there are passages in which the stranger is regarded as the special client of God, and is enjoined to look to Him for protection.

The Jews were not in practice, however, faithful to the humanitarianism of their law, and, in keeping with other nations, showed a tendency to restrict divine favours within the limits of their own land, and to maintain throughout their history an attitude of aloofness and repellent isolation which even amounted to intolerance towards other races. In early days, however, the obligation of hospitality was regarded as sacred.[2] Nor must we forget that, whatever may have been the Jewish practice, the promise enshrined in their revelation involves the unity of mankind; while several of the prophecies and Psalms look forward to a world-wide blessing.[3] In Isaiah we even read, 'God of the whole earth shall He be called.'[4]

[1] Lev. xix. 18.
[2] Gen. xviii. xix.
[3] Isa. lxi.; Ps. xxii. 27; xlviii. 2-10; lxxxvii.
[4] Isa. liv. 5.

The stream of preparation for Christianity thus flowed steadily through three channels, the Greek, the Roman, and the Jew. Each contributed something to the fullness of the time.

The problem of Greek civilisation was the problem of *freedom*, the realisation of self-dependence and self-determination. In the pursuit of these ends Greece garnered conclusions which are the undying possessions of the world. If to the graces of self-abasement, meekness and charity it remained a stranger, it gave a new worth to the individual, and showed that without the virtues of wisdom, courage, steadfastness and justice man could not attain to moral character.

The Roman's gift was unbending devotion to *duty*. With a genius for rule he forced men into one polity; and by levelling material barriers he enabled the nations to commune, and made a highway for the message of freedom and brotherhood. But, intoxicated with material glory, he became blind to spiritual good, and in his universal toleration he emptied all faiths of their content, driving the masses to superstition, and the few who yearned for a higher life to withdrawal from the world.

The Jewish contribution was *righteousness*. Not specially distinguished by intellectual powers, nor gifted in political enterprise, his endowment was spiritual insight, and by his dispersion throughout the world he made others the sharers of his inheritance. But his tendency was to keep his privilege to himself, or so to load it with legal restrictions as to bar its acceptance for strangers; and in his pride of isolation he failed to recognise his Deliverer when He came.

Thus, negatively and positively, by failure and by partial attainment, the world was prepared for Him who was the desire of all nations. In Christ were gathered up the wisdom of the Greek, the courage of the Roman, the righteousness of the Jew; and He who came not to destroy but to fulfil at once interpreted and satisfied the longings of the ages.

SECTION B

PERSONALITY

CHAPTER IV

THE ESTIMATE OF MAN

HAVING thus far laid the foundations of our study by a discussion of its presuppositions and sources, we are now prepared to consider man as the personal subject of the new life. The spirit of God which takes hold of man and renews his life must not be conceived as a foreign power breaking the continuity of consciousness. The natural is the basis of the supernatural. It is not a new personality which is created; it is the old that is transformed and completed. If there was not already implicit in man that which predisposed him for the higher life, a consciousness to which the spirit could appeal, then Christianity would be simply a mechanical or magical influence without ethical significance and having no relation to the past history of the individual. But that is not the teaching of our Lord or of His apostles. We are bound, therefore, to assume a certain substratum of powers, physical, mental and moral, as constituting the raw material of which the new personality is formed. The spirit of God does not quench the natural faculties of man, but works through and upon them, raising them to a higher value.[1]

1. But before proceeding to a consideration of these elements of human consciousness to which Christianity appeals, we must glance at two opposite theories of human nature, either of which, if the complete view of man, would be inimical to Christianity.[2]

[1] See Author's *Ethics of St. Paul.*

[2] Cf. Murray, *Handbook of Christian Ethics.* See also Hegel, *Phil. der Religion,* vol. ii. p. 210 ff., where the antithesis is finely worked out.

1. The first view is that man *by nature is morally good.* His natural impulses are from birth wholly virtuous, and require only to be left to their own operation to issue in a life of perfection. Those who favour this contention claim the support of Scripture. Not only does the whole tone of the Bible imply the inherent goodness of primitive man, but many texts both in the Old and New Testaments suggest that God made man upright.[1] Among the Greeks, and especially the Stoics, this view prevailed. All nature was regarded as the creation of perfect reason, and the primitive state as one of uncorrupted innocence. Pelagius espoused this doctrine, and it continued to influence dogmatic theology not only in the form of Semi-Pelagianism, but even as modifying the severer tenets of Augustine. The theory received fresh importance during the revolutionary movement of the eighteenth century, and found a strong exponent in Rousseau. 'Let us sweep away all conventions and institutions of man's making and get back to the simplicity of a primitive age.' The man of nature is guileless, and his natural instincts would preserve him in uncorrupted purity if they were not perverted by the artificial usages of society. So profoundly did this theory dominate the thoughts of men that its influence may be detected not only in the political fanaticism which found expression in the French Revolution, but also in the practical views of the Protestant Church acting as a deterrent to missionary effort.[2] This view of human nature, though not perhaps formally stated, finds expression in much of the literature of the present day. Professor James cites Theodore Parker and other leaders of the liberal movement in New England of last century as representatives of the tendency.[3] These writers do not wholly ignore moral effect, but they make light of sin, and regard it not as something positive, but merely as a stage in the development of man.

[1] Gen. i. 26; Eccles. vii. 29; Col. iii. 10; James iii. 9.
[2] See Hugh Miller's *Essays*, quoted by Murray, *op. cit.*, p. 137.
[3] Cf. W. James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*, pp. 81-86.

2. The other theory of human nature goes to the opposite extreme. Man by nature is *utterly depraved*, and his natural instincts are wholly bad. Those who take this view also appeal to Scripture: 'Man is shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin.' Many passages in the New Testament, and especially in the writings of St. Paul, seem to emphasise the utter degradation of man. It was not, however, until the time of Augustine that this idea of innate depravity was formulated into a doctrine. The Augustinean dogma has coloured all later theology. In the Roman Catholic Church, even in such a writer as Pascal, and in Protestantism, under the influence of Calvin, the complete corruption of man's nature has been depicted in the blackest hues.

These theories of human nature represent aspects of truth, and are false only in their isolation.

The doctrine that man is innocent by nature is not in agreement with history. Nowhere is the noble savage to be found. The primitive man exhibits the same tendencies as his more civilised neighbour, and his animal passions are indulged without control of reason or consideration for others. Indeed, Hobbes's view of early society as a state of war and rapacity is much truer to fact than Rousseau's. The noble savage is simply a fiction of the imagination, an abstraction obtained by withdrawing him from all social environment. But even could we conceive of a human being kept from infancy in isolation, he would not fulfil the true idea of virtue, but would simply develop into a negative creature, a mutilated being bereft of all that constitutes our notion of humanity. Such experiences as are possible only in society—all forms of goodness as suggested by such words as 'love,' 'sympathy,' 'service'—would never emerge at all. The native instincts of man are simply potencies or capacities for morality; they must have a life of opportunity for their evolution and exercise. The abstract self prior to and apart from all objective experience is an illusion. It is only in relation to a world of moral beings that the moral life becomes possible for man. The innocence which the advocates of this theory contend for is

something not unlike the non-rational existence of the animal. It is true that the brute is not immoral, but neither is it moral. The whole significance of the passions as they exist in man lies in the fact that they are not purely animal, but, since they belong to man, are always impregnated with reason. It is reason that gives to them their moral worth, and it is because man must always put his self into every desire or impulse that it becomes the instrument either of virtue or of vice.[1]

But if the theory of primitive purity is untenable, not less so is that of innate depravity. Here, also, its advocates are not consistent with themselves. Even the systems of theology derived from Augustine do not contend that man was created with an evil propensity. His sin was the result of an historical catastrophe. In his paradisiacal condition man is conceived as possessing a nobility and innocence of nature far beyond that even which Rousseau depicted. Milton, in spite of his Calvinistic puritanism, has painted a picture of man's ideal innocence which for idyllic charm is unequalled in literature.[2] Nor does historical inquiry bear out the theory of the utter depravity of man. The latest anthropological research into the condition of primitive man suggests rather that even the lowest forms of savage life are not without some dim consciousness of a higher power and some latent capacity for good.[3] Finally, these writers are not more successful when they claim the support of the Bible. Not only are there many examples of virtue in patriarchal times, but, as we have seen, there are not a few texts which imply the natural goodness of man. Our Lord repeatedly assumes the affinity with goodness of those who had not hitherto come into contact with the Gospel, as in the case of Jairus, the rich young ruler, and the Syrophenician woman. It has been affirmed by Wernle [4] that the Apostle Paul in the interests of salvation grossly

[1] Cf. Goethe's *Faust*. See also Nietzsche, *Götzendämmerung* for trenchant criticism of Rousseau.
[2] Murray, *idem*.
[3] Max Müller, Fraser, *Golden Bough*, and others.
[4] *Anfänge des Christentums*.

exaggerates the condition of the natural man. 'He violently extinguished every other light in the world so that Jesus might shine in it alone.' But this surely is a misstatement. It is true that no more scathing denunciation of sinful human nature has ever been presented than the account of heathen immorality to be found in the first chapter of Romans. Yet the apostle does not actually affirm, nor even imply, that pagan society was so utterly corrupt that it had lost all knowledge of moral good. Though so bad as to be beyond hope of recovery by natural effort, it was not so bad as to have quenched in utter darkness the light which lighteth every man.

3. Christianity, while acknowledging the partial truth of both of these theories, reconciles them. If, on the one hand, man were innately good and could of himself attain to righteousness, there would be no need of a gospel of renewal. But history and experience alike show that that is not the case. If, on the other hand, man were wholly bad, had no susceptibility for virtue and truth, then there would be nothing in him, as we have seen, which could respond to the Christian appeal.[1] Christianity alone offers an answer to the question in which Pascal presents the great antithesis of human nature: 'If man was not made for God, how is it that he can be happy only in God? And if he is made for God, how is he so opposite to God?'[2] However, then, we may account for the presence of evil in human nature, a true view of Christianity involves the conception of a latent spiritual element in man, a capacity for goodness to which his whole being points. Matter itself may be said not merely to exist for spirit, but to have within it already the potency of the higher forms of life; and just as nature is making towards humanity, and in humanity at last finds itself; as

> 'Striving to be man, the worm
> Mounts through all the spires of form,'[3]

[1] Cf. Ottley, *Christian Ideas and Ideals*, p. 52. 'Christianity does justice both to man's inherent instinct that he has been made for God, and to his sense of unworthiness and incapacity.'

[2] *Pensées*, part ii. art. 1.

[3] Emerson.

so man, even in his most primitive state, has within him the promise of higher things. No theory of his origin can interfere with the assumption that he belongs to a moral sphere, and is capable of a life which is shaping itself to spiritual ends. Whatever be man's past history and evolution, he has from the beginning been made in God's image, and bears the divine impress in all the lineaments of body and soul. His degradation cannot wholly obliterate his inherent nobility, and indeed his actual corruption bears witness to his possible holiness. Granting the hypothesis of evolution, matter even in its crudest beginnings contains potentially all the rich variety of the natural and spiritual life. The reality of a growing thing lies in its highest form of being. In the light of the last we explain the first. If the universe is, as science pronounces, an organic totality which is ever converting its promise into actuality, then 'the ultimate interpretration even of the lowest existence of the world, cannot be given except on principles which are adequate to explain the highest.'[1] Christian morality is therefore nothing else than the morality prepared from all eternity, and is but the highest realisation of that which man even at his lowest has ever been, though unconsciously, striving after. All that is best and highest in man, all that he is capable of yet becoming, has really existed within him from the very first, just as the flower and leaf and fruit are contained implicitly in the seedling. This is the Pauline view of human nature. Jesus Christ, according to the apostle, is the End and Consummation of the whole creation. Everywhere in all men there is a capacity for Christ. Whatever be his origin, man comes upon the stage of being bearing within him a great and far-reaching destiny. There is in him, as Browning says, 'a tendency to God.' He is not simply what he is now, but all that he is yet to be.

II. Assuming, then, the inherent spirituality of man, we may now proceed to examine his moral consciousness with a view to seeing how its various constituents form what we have called the substratum of the Christian life.

[1] Ed. Caird, *Critical Philosophy of Kant*, p. 35.

1. We must guard against seeming to adopt the old and discredited psychology which divides man into a number of separate and independent faculties. Man is not made like a machine, of a number of adjusted parts. *He is a unity*, a living organism, in which every part has something of all the others; and all together, animated by one spirit, constitute a living whole which we call personality. While the Bible is rich in terms denoting the different constituents of man, neither the Old Testament nor the New regards human nature as a plurality of powers. A kind of unity or hierarchy of the natural faculties is assumed, and amid all the difference of function and variety of operation it is undeniable that the New Testament writers generally, and particularly St. Paul, presuppose a unity of consciousness—a single ego, or Soul. It is unnecessary to discuss the question, much debated by Biblical psychologists, as to whether the apostle recognises a threefold or a twofold division of man.[1] Our view is that he recognised only a twofold division, body and soul, which, however, he always regarded as constituting a unity, the body itself being psychical or interpenetrated with spirit, and the spirit always acting upon and working through the physical powers.

Man is a unique phenomenon in the world. Even on his physical side he is not a piece of dead matter, but is instinct through and through with spirit. And on his psychical side he is not an unsubstantial wraith, but a being inconceivable apart from outward embodiment. Perhaps the most general term which we may adopt is ψυχή or Soul—the living self or vital and animating principle which is at once the seat of all bodily sensation and the source of the higher cognitive faculties.

2. The fact of ethical interest from which we must proceed is that man, in virtue of his spiritual nature, is *akin to God*, and participates in the three great elements of the divine Personality—thought, love and will.[2] Personality has been called 'the culminating fact of the uni-

[1] See Author's *Ethics of St. Paul.*

[2] Ottley, *idem*, p. 55.

verse.' And it is the task of man to realise his true personality—to fulfil the law of his highest self. In this work he has to harmonise and bring to the unity of his personal life, by means of one dominating force, the various elements of his nature—his sensuous, emotional, and rational powers. By the constitution of his being he belongs to a larger world, and when he is true to himself he is ever reaching out towards it. From the very beginning of life, and even in the lowest phases of his nature he has within him the potency of the divine. He carries the infinite in his soul, and by reason of his very existence shares the life of God. The value of his soul in this sense is repeatedly emphasised in scripture. In our Lord's teaching it is perhaps the most distinctive note. The soul, or self-conscious spiritual ego, is spoken of as capable of being 'acquired' or 'lost.' [1] It is acquired or possessed when a man seeks to regain the image in which he was created. It is lost when he refuses to respond to those spiritual influences by which Christ besets him, and by means of which the soul is moulded into the likeness of God.

3. A full presentation of this subject would involve a reference even to the physical powers which form an integral part of man and witness to his eternal destiny.

(1) The very body is to be redeemed and sanctified, and made an instrument of the new life in Christ. The extremes of asceticism and self-indulgence, both of which found advocates in Greek philosophy and even in the early Church, have no countenance in scripture. Evil does not reside in the flesh, as the Greeks held, but in the will which uses the flesh for its base ends. Not mutilation but transformation, not suppression but consecration is the Christian ideal. The natural is the basis of the spiritual. Man is the Temple of God, every part of which is sacred. Christ claims to be King of the body as of every other domain of life. The secret of spiritual progress does not consist in the unflinching destruction of the flesh, but in its firm but kindly discipline for loyal service. It is not, therefore, by

[1] Luke xxi. 19.

leaving the body behind but by taking it up into our higher self that we become spiritual. As Browning says,

> 'Let us cry all good things
> Are ours, nor soul helps flesh more now
> Than flesh helps soul.'

Without dwelling further upon the physical elements of man, there are three constituents or functions of personality prominent in the New Testament which claim our consideration, reason, conscience and will. It is just because man possesses, or *is* mind, conscience and will, that he is capable of responding to the life which Christ offers, and of sharing in the divine character which he reveals.

(2) The term νοῦς, or reason, is of frequent occurrence in the New Testament. Christianity highly honours the intellectual powers of man and accords to the mind an important rôle in apprehending and entering into the thoughts and purposes of God. 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind,' says Jesus. Many are disposed to think that the exercise of faith, the immediate organ of spiritual apprehension, is checked by the interference of reason. But so far from faith and reason being opposed, not only are they necessary to each other, but in all real faith there is an element of reason. In all religious feeling, as in morality, art, and other spheres of human activity, there is the underlying element of reason which is the characteristic of all the activities of a self-conscious intelligence. To endeavour to elicit that element, to infuse into the spontaneous and unsifted conceptions of religious experience the objective clearness, necessity and organic unity of thought—is the legitimate aim of science, in religion as in other spheres. It would be strange if in the highest of all provinces of human experience intelligence must renounce her claim.[1] The Ritschlian value-judgment theory in its disparagement of philosophy is practically a dethronement of reason. And the protest of Pragmatism and the voluntarists gener-

[1] Cf. John Caird, *Introd. to the Philosophy of Religion.*

ally against what they term 'Intellectualism'[1] and their distrust of the logical faculty, are virtually an avowal of despair and a resort to agnosticism, if not to scepticism. If we are to renounce the quest for objective truth, and accept 'those ideas only which we can assimilate, validate, corroborate,'[2] those ideas in short which are 'practically useful in guiding us to desirable issues,' then it would seem we are committed to a world of subjective caprice and confusion and must give up the belief in a rational view of the universe.

(3) In spite of the wonderful suggestiveness of M. Bergson's philosophy, we are unable to accept the distinction which that writer draws between intuition and intelligence, in which he seems to imply that intuition is the higher of the two activities. Intelligence, according to this writer, is at home exclusively in spatial considerations, in solids, in geometry, but it is to be repelled as a foreign element when it comes to deal with life. Bergson would exclude rational thought and intelligence from life, creation, and initiative. The clearest evidence of intuition is in the works of great artists. 'What is implied is that in artistic creation, in the work of genius and imagination, we have pure novelty issuing from no premeditated or rational idea, but simply pure irrationality and unaccountableness.'[3] The work of art cannot be predicated; it is beyond reason, as life is beyond logic and law.[4] But so far from finding life unintelligible, it would be nearer the truth to say that man's reason can, strictly speaking, understand nothing else.[5] 'Instinct finds,' says Bergson, 'but does not search. Reason searches but cannot find.'[6] 'But,' adds Professor Dewey, 'what we find is meaningless save as measured by searching, and so instincts and passions must be elevated into reason.'[7] In the lower creatures instinct does the

[1] Cf. Wm. James's *Pragmatism* and *A Pluralistic World*.
[2] *Idem*, p. 201.
[3] Cf. Bosanquet, *The Principles of Individuality and Value*.
[4] Bergson, *Evol. Creat.*, p. 174 f.
[5] Cf. E. Caird, *Kant*, vol. ii. pp. 530 and 535.
[6] *Evol. Creat.*, p. 159.
[7] *Hib. Jour.*, July 1911.

work of reason—sufficiently for the simple conditions in which the animal lives. And in the earlier stages of human life instinct plays an important part. But when man, both as an individual and as humanity, advances to a more complex life, instinct is unequal to the new task confronting him. We cannot be content to be guided by instinct. Reason asserts itself and seeks to permeate all our experiences, and give unity and purpose to all our thoughts and acts.

The recent disparagement of intellectualism is probably a reaction against the extreme absolutism of German idealism which, beginning with Kant, found fullest expression in Fichte, Schelling and Hegel. But the true way to meet exclusive rationalism is not to discredit the function of mind, but to give to it a larger domain of experience. We do not exalt faith by emptying it of all intellectual content and reducing it to mere subjective feeling; nor do we explain genius by ascribing its acts to blind, unthinking impulse. 'The real is the rational,' says Hegel. Truth, in other words, presupposes a rational universe which we, as rational beings, must assume in all our thought and effort. To set up faith against reason, or intuition against intelligence is to set the mind against itself. We cannot set up an order of facts, as Professor James would have us do, outside the intellectual realm; for what does not fall within our experience can have for us no meaning, and what for us has no meaning cannot be an object of faith. An ineradicable belief in the rationality of the world is the ultimate basis of all art, morality and religion. To rest in mere intuition or emotion and not to seek objective truth would be for man to renounce his true prerogative and to open the door for all kinds of superstition and caprice.

III. In the truest sense it may be claimed that this is the teaching of Christianity. When Christ says that we are to love God with our minds He seems to imply that there is such a thing as intelligent affection. The distinctive feature of our Lord's claim is that God is not satisfied when His creatures render a merely implicit obedience; He

desires also the enthusiastic use of their intellect, intent on knowing everything that it is possible for men to know about His character and ways. And is there not something sublime in this demand of God that the noblest part of man should be consecrated to Him? God reveals Himself in Christ to our highest; and He would have us respond to His manifestations with our highest. Nor is this the attitude of Christ only. The Apostle Paul also honours the mind, and gives to it the supreme place as the organ of apprehending and appropriating divine truth. Mr. Lecky brings the serious charge against Christianity that it habitually disregards the virtues of the intellect. If there is any truth in this statement it refers, not to the genius of the Gospel itself, nor to the earlier exponents of it, but rather to the Church in those centuries which followed the conversion of Constantine. No impartial reader of St. Paul's Epistles can aver that the apostle made a virtue of ignorance and credulity. These documents, which are the earliest exposition of the mind of Christ, impress us rather with the intellectual boldness of their attempt to grapple with the greatest problems of life. Paul was essentially a thinker; and, as Sabatier says, is to be ranked with Plato and Aristotle, Augustine and Kant, as one of the mightiest intellectual forces of the world. But not content with being a thinker himself, he sought to make his converts thinkers too, and he does not hesitate to make the utmost demand upon their reasoning faculties. He assumes a natural capacity in man for apprehending the truth, and appeals to the mind rather than to the emotions. The Gospel is styled by him 'the word of truth,' and he bids men 'prove all things.' Worship is not a meaningless ebullition of feeling or a superstitious ritual, but a form of self-expression which is to be enlightened and guided by thought. 'I will pray with the understanding and sing with the understanding.'

It is indeed a strong and virile Christianity which Paul and the other apostles proclaim. It is no magic spell they seek to exert. They are convinced that there is that in

the mind of man which is ready to respond to a thoughtful Gospel. If men will only give their unprejudiced minds to God's Word, it is able to make them 'wise unto salvation.' It would lead us beyond the scope of this chapter to consider the peculiar Pauline significance of faith. It is enough to say that while he does not identify it with intellectual assent, as little does he confine it to mere subjective assurance. It is the primary act of the human spirit when brought into contact with divine truth, and it lies at the root of a new ethical power, and of a deeper knowledge of God. If the apostle appears to speak disparagingly of wisdom it is the wisdom of pride, of 'knowledge that puffeth up.' He warns Timothy against 'science falsely so called.' On the whole St. Paul exalts the intellect and bids men attain to the full exercise of their mental powers. 'Be not children in understanding: but in understanding be men.' [1]

If, as we have seen, the body be an integral part of man, and has its place and function in the Christian life, not less, but even more, has the mind a special ethical importance. It is to the intelligence that Christianity appeals, and it is with the rational faculties that moral truth is apprehended and applied to life. Reason in its broadest sense is the most distinctive feature of man, and by means of it he exerts his mightiest influence upon the world. Mental and moral growth are closely connected, and personal character is largely moulded by thought. 'As a man thinketh in his heart so is he.' Not only at the beginning of the new life, but in all its after stages the mind is an important factor, and its consecration and cultivation are laid upon us as an obligation by Him in whose image we have been made, and whom to know and serve is our highest end.

[1] Some sentences in the above are borrowed from the writer's *Ethics of St. Paul.*

CHAPTER V

THE WITNESS OF CONSCIENCE

PASSING from the physical and mental constituents of man, we turn to the more distinctly moral elements; and in this chapter we shall consider that aspect of the human consciousness to which mankind has given the name of 'conscience.'

No subject has presented greater difficulties to the moralist, and there are few which require more careful elucidation. From the earliest period of reflection the question how we came to have moral ideas has been a disputed one. At first it was thought that there existed in man a distinct innate faculty or moral sense which was capable of deciding categorically man's duty without reference to history or condition. But in modern times the theory of evolution has discredited the inviolable character of conscience, and sought rather to determine its nature and significance in the light of its origin and development. Only the barest outline of the subject can be attempted here, since our object is simply to show that however we may account for its presence, there is in man, as we know him, some power or function which bears witness to divine truth and fits him to respond to the revelation of Christ. It will be most convenient to consider the subject under three heads: I. the history of the Conception; II. the nature and origin of Conscience; and III. its present validity.

I. *History of the Conception.*—'The name conscience,' says a writer on the subject, 'appears somewhat late in

the history of the world : that for which it stands is as old as mankind.' [1]

1. Without pushing our inquiries back into the legendary lore of savage life, in which we find evidence of the idea in the social institutions and religious enactments of primitive races, it is among the Greeks that the word, if not the idea of conscience, first meets us. Perhaps the earliest trace of the notion is to be found in the mythological conception of the Furies, whose business it was to avenge crime—a conception which might be regarded as the reaction of man's own nature against the violation of better instincts, if not as the reflection or embodiment of what is popularly called conscience. It can scarcely be doubted that the Erinnyes of Æschylus were deities of remorse, and possess psychological significance as symbols of the primitive action of conscience.[2] Though Sophocles is less of a theologian than Æschylus, and problems of Ethics count less than the human interest of his story, the law of Nemesis does find in him dramatic expression, and the noble declaration put into the mouth of Antigone concerning the unwritten laws of God that 'know no change and are not of to-day nor yesterday, but must be obeyed in preference to the temporary commandments of men,' [3] is a protest on behalf of conscience against human oppression. And even in Euripides, regarded as an impious scoffer by some scholars,[4] there are not wanting, especially in the example of Alcestis, evidence of belief in that divine justice and moral order of which the virtues of self-devotion and sacrifice in the soul of man are the witness.

Socrates was among the first teachers of antiquity who led the way to that self-knowledge which is of the essence of conscience, and in the 'Dæmon,' or inner voice, which he claimed to possess, some writers have detected the trace

[1] Davidson, *The Christian Conscience.*
[2] Cf. Symonds, *Studies of Greek Poets*, first series, p. 191.
[3] *Antigone*, Plumptre's Trans., 455-9.
[4] Cf. Bunsen, *God in History*, vol. ii. p. 224 ; also Campbell, *Religion in Greek Literature.*

of the intuitive monitor of man. Plato's discussion of the question, 'What is the highest good?' involves the capacity of moral judgment, and his conception of reason regulating desire suggests a power in the mind whose function it is to point to the highest good and to subordinate to it all the other impulses of man. In the ethics of Aristotle there is a reference to a faculty in man or 'rule within,' which, he says, the beasts lack.

But it is among the Stoics that the word first appears; and it is to the Roman moralist, Seneca, that we are indebted for the earlier definite perception of an abiding consciousness bearing witness concerning a man's own conduct. The writings of Epictetus, Aurelius, and Seneca approach in moral sublimity and searching self-analysis the New Testament Scriptures. It was probably to the Stoics that St. Paul was indebted for the word συνείδησις to which he has given so distinctive a meaning that it has coloured and determined the whole later history of the moral consciousness.

2. But if the word as used in the New Testament comes from Greek sources the idea itself was long prevalent in the Jewish conception of life, which, even more than the Greek, was constitutive of, and preparatory to, the Christian view. The word does not, indeed, occur in the Old Testament, but the question of God to Adam, 'Where art thou?' the story of Cain and the curse he was to suffer for the murder of his brother; the history of Joseph's dealing with his brethren; the account of David's sin and conviction, are by implication appeals to conscience. Indeed, the whole history of Israel, from the time when the promise was given to Abraham and the law through Moses until the denunciations of wrong-doing and the predictions of doom of the later prophets, is one long education of the moral sense. It is the problem of conscience that imparts its chief interest to the book of Job; and one reason why the Psalms in all ages have been so highly prized is because they are the cries of a wounded conscience, and the confessions of a convicted and contrite heart.

3. If we turn to the New Testament we find, as we might expect, a much clearer testimony to the reality of the conscience. The word came into the hands of the New Testament writers ready-made, but they gave to it a richer meaning, so that it is to them we must go if we would understand the nature and the supremacy of the conscience. The term occurs thirty-one times in the New Testament, but it does not appear once in the Gospels. It is, indeed, principally a Pauline expression, and to the apostle of the Gentiles more than to any other writer is due the clear conception and elucidation of the term. It would be a mistake, however, to assume that the doctrine itself depends entirely upon the use of the word. Our Lord never, indeed, employs the term, but surely no teacher ever sounded the depths of the human heart as He did. It was His mission to reveal men to themselves, to convict them of sin, and show the need of that life of righteousness and purity which He came to give. 'Why even of yourselves,' He said, 'judge ye not what is right?' Christ, indeed, might be called the conscience of man. To awaken, renew and enlighten the moral sense of individuals, to make them know what they were and what they were capable of becoming was the work of the Son of Man, and in contact with Him every one was morally unveiled.

The word occurs twice in Acts, five times in Hebrews, three times in the Epistles of Peter, and more than twenty times in the Pauline Epistles. St. Paul's doctrine of the conscience is contained in Romans ii. 14, 15, where he speaks of the Gentiles being 'a law unto themselves,' inasmuch as they possess a 'law written in their hearts,' 'their conscience bearing witness, therewith accusing or excusing them.' The idea underlying the passage is the responsibility of all men for their actions, their condemnation in sin, and their acceptance in righteousness. This applies to Gentiles as well as Jews, and it applies to them because, though they have not the explicit revelation of the law, they have a revelation of the good in their hearts. The passage therefore teaches two things: (1) That man has received a revela-

tion of good sufficient at all stages of his history to make him morally responsible; and (2) That man possesses a moral faculty which indeed is not a separate power, but the whole moral consciousness or personality in virtue of which he recognises and approves of the good which, either as the law written in his heart or as the law communicated in the Decalogue, has been revealed to him, and by whose authority he judges himself.

II. *Nature and Origin of Conscience.*—While experience seems to point to the existence of something in man witnessing to the right, there is great diversity of view as to the nature of this moral element. The word 'Conscience' stands for a concept whose meaning is far from well defined, and the lack of definiteness has left its trace upon ethical theories. While some moralists assign conscience to the rational or intellectual side of man, and make it wholly a faculty of judgment; others attribute it to feeling or impulse, and make it a sense of pleasure or pain; others again associate it more closely with the will, and regard its function to be legislative or imperative. These differences of opinion reveal the complexity of the nature of conscience. The fact is, that it belongs to all these departments—the intellectual, emotional, and volitional—and ought to be regarded not as a single faculty distinct from the particular decisions, motives, and acts of man, not as an activity foreign to the ego, but as the expression of the whole personality. The question of the origin of conscience, though closely connected with its nature, is for ethics only of secondary importance. It is desirable, however, to indicate the two main theories which have been held regarding its genesis. While there are several varieties, they may be divided broadly into two—Intuitionalism and Evolutionalism.

1. *Nativism*, of which Intuitionalism is the most common form, regards the conscience as a separate natural endowment, coeval with the creation of man. Every individual, it is maintained, has been endowed by nature with a distinct faculty or organ by which he can immediately and clearly

pronounce upon the rightness or wrongness of his own actions. In its most pronounced form this theory maintains that man has not merely a general consciousness of moral distinctions, but possesses from the very first, apart from all experience and education, a definite and clear knowledge of the particular vices which ought to be avoided and the particular virtues which ought to be practised. This theory is usually connected with a form of theism which maintains that the conscience is particularly a divine gift, and is, indeed, God's special witness or oracle in the heart of man.

Though there would seem to be an element of truth in intuitionalism, since man, to be man at all, must be conceived as made for God and having that in him which points to the end or ideal of his being, still in its most extreme form it would not be difficult to show that this theory is untenable. It is objectionable, because it involves two assumptions, of which the one conflicts with experience, and the other with the psychological nature of man.

(1) Experience gives us no warrant for supposing that duty is always the same, and that conscience is therefore exempt from change. History shows rather that moral convictions only gradually emerge, and that the laws and customs of one age are often repudiated by the next. What may seem right to one man is no longer so to his descendant. History records deeds committed in one generation in the name of conscience which in the same name a later generation has condemned with horror. Moreover, the possibility of a conflict between duties proves that unconditional truth exists at no stage of moral development. There is no law so sacred that it may not in special cases have to yield to the sacredness of a higher law. When duties conflict, our choice cannot be determined by any *a priori* principle residing in ourselves. It must be governed by that wider conception of the moral life which is to be gained through one's previous development, and on the basis of a ripe moral experience.[1] (2) Nor is this theory consistent with

[1] Cf. Wundt, *Ethik*, vol. ii. p. 66.

the known nature of man. We know of no separate and independent organ called conscience. Man must not be divided against himself. Reason and feeling enter into all acts of will, since these are not processes different in kind, but elements of voluntary activity itself and inseparable from it. It is impossible for a man to be determined in his actions or judgments by a mere external formula of duty, a 'categorical imperative,' as Kant calls it, apart from motives. Moreover, all endowments may be regarded as divine gifts, and it is a precarious position to claim for one faculty a spiritually divine or supernatural origin which is denied to others. Man is related to God in his whole nature. The view which regards the law of duty as something foreign to man, stern and unchangeable in its decrees, and in nowise dependent upon the gradual development and growing content of the moral life is not consistent either with history or psychology.

2. *Evolutionalism*, which since the time of Darwin has been applied by Spencer and others to account for the growth of our moral ideas, holds that conscience is the result of a process of development, but does not limit the process to the life of the individual. It extends to the experience of the race. While admitting the existence of conscience as a moral faculty in the rational man of to-day, it holds that it did not exist in his primitive ancestors. Earlier individuals accumulated a certain amount of experience and moral knowledge, the result of which, as a habit or acquired capacity, was handed down to their successors. From the first man has been a member of society, and is what he is in virtue of his relation to it. All that makes him man, all his powers of body and mind, are inherited. His instincts and desires, which are the springs of action, are themselves the creation of heredity, association and environment. The individual takes its shape at every point from its relation to the social organism of which it is a part. What man really seeks from the earliest is satisfaction. 'No school,' says Mr. Spencer, 'can avoid taking for the ultimate moral aim a desirable

state of feeling.'[1] Prolonged experience of pleasure in connection with actions which serve social ends has resulted in certain physiological changes in the brain and nervous system rendering these actions constant. Thus, according to Spencer, is begotten conscience.

While acknowledging the service which the evolutionary theory has done in calling attention to the place and function of experience and social environment in the development of the moral life, and in showing that moral judgment, like every other capacity, must participate in the gradual unfolding of personality, as a conclusive explanation of conscience it must be pronounced insufficient. Press the analysis of sensation as far back as we please, and make an analysis of instincts and feelings as detailed as possible, we never get in man a mere sensation, as we find it in the lower animal; it is always sensation related to, and modified by, a self. In the simplest human instincts there is always a spiritual element which is the basis of the possibility at once of knowledge and morality. 'That countless generations,' says Green, 'should have passed during which a transmitted organism was progressively modified by reaction on its surroundings, by struggle for existence or otherwise, till its functions became such that an eternal consciousness could realise or produce itself through them—might add to the wonder with which the consideration of what we do and are must always fill us, but it could not alter the results of that consideration.'[2]

No process of evolution, even though it draws upon illimitable ages, can evolve what was not already present in the form of a spiritual potency. The empiric treatment of conscience as the result of social environment and culture leads inevitably back to the assumption of some rudimentary moral consciousness without which the development of a moral sense would be an impossibility. The history of mankind, moreover, shows that conscience, so far from being merely the reflex of the prevailing customs and institutions of a particular age, has frequently dis-

[1] *Data of Ethics*, p. 18. [2] *Proleg.*, § 83.

closed its special character by reacting upon and protesting against the recognised traditions of society. The individual conscience has often been in advance of its times; and the progress of man has been secured as much by the champions of liberty as by those who conform to accepted customs. In all moral advance there comes a stage when, in the conflict of habit and principle, conscience asserts itself, not only in revealing a higher ideal, but in urging men to seek it.

III. *The Validity and Witness of Conscience.*—It is not, however, with the origin of conscience, but with its capacities and functions in its developed state that Ethics is primarily concerned. The beginning must be interpreted by the end, and the process by the result to which it tends.

1. The Christian doctrine is committed neither to the intuitional nor the evolutionist theory, but rather may be said to reconcile both by retaining that which is true in each. While it holds to the inherent ability on the part of a being made in God's image to recognise at the different stages of his growth and development God's will as it has been progressively revealed, it avoids the necessity of conceiving man as possessing from the very beginning a full-fledged organ of infallible authority. The conscience participates in man's general progress and enlightenment. Nor can the moral development of the individual be held separate from the moral development of the race. As there is a moral solidarity of mankind, so the individual conscience is conditional by the social conscience. The individual does not start in life with a full-grown moral apparatus any more than he starts with a matured physical frame. The most distinctively spiritual attainments of man have their antecedents in less human and more animal capacities. As there is a continuity of human life, so individuals and peoples inherit the moral assets of previous generations, and incorporate in their experience all past attainments. Conscience is involved in man's moral history. It suffers in his sin and alienation from God, becoming clouded in its insight and feeble in its testimony, but it shares also in his

spiritual advancement, growing more sensitive and decisive in its judgments.

(1) Conscience, as the New Testament teaches, can be *perverted* and debased. It is always open to a free agent to disobey his conscience and reject its authority. On the intuitional theory, which regards the conscience as a separable and independent faculty, it would be difficult to vindicate the terrible consequences of such conduct. It is because the conscience is the man himself as related to the consciousness of the divine will that the effects are so injurious. Conscience may be (*a*) *Stained*, defiled, and polluted in its very texture (1 Cor. viii. 7); (*b*) *Branded* or seared (1 Tim. iv. 2), rendered insensible to all feeling for good; (*c*) *Perverted*, in which the very light within becomes darkness. In this last stage the man calls evil good and good evil—the very springs of his nature are poisoned and the avenues of his soul are closed.

> 'This is death, and the sole death,
> When man's loss comes to him from his gain.'[1]

(2) But if conscience can be perverted it may also be *improved*. The education is twofold, social and individual. Through society, says Green, personality is actualised. 'No individual can make a conscience for himself. He always needs a society to make it for him.'[2] There is no such thing as a purely individual conscience. Man can only realise himself, come to his best, in relation to others. The conditions amid which a man is born and reared—the home, the school, the church, the state—are the means by which the conscience is exercised and educated. But the individual is not passive. He has also a part to play; and the whole task of man may be regarded as an endeavour to make his conscience effective in life. The New Testament writers refrain from speaking of the conscience as an unerring and perfect organ. Their language implies rather the possibility of its gradual enlightenment; and St. Paul specially dwells upon the necessity of 'growing in spiritual

[1] Browning.

[2] *Proleg.*, § 321.

knowledge and perception.' As life advances moral judgment may be modified and corrected by fuller knowledge, and the perception of a particular form of conduct as good may yield to the experience of something better.

2. 'It is one of the most wonderful things,' says Professor Wundt, 'about moral development, that it unites so many conditions of subordinate value in the accomplishment of higher results,' [1] and the worth of morality is not endangered because the grounds of its realisation in special cases do not always correspond in elevation to the moral ideas. The conscience is not an independent faculty which issues its mandates irrespective of experience. Its judgments are always conditioned by motives. The moral imperatives of conscience may be grouped under four heads: [2] (1) *External constraints*, including all forms of punishment for immoral actions and the social disadvantages which such actions involve. These can only produce the lowest grade of morality, outward propriety, the mere appearance of virtue which has only a negative value in so far as it avoids what is morally offensive. (2) *Internal constraints*, consisting of influences excited by the example of others, by public opinion and habits formed through education and training. (3) *Self-satisfaction*, originating in the agent's own consciousness. It may be a sense of pleasure or feeling of self-approbation: or higher still, the idea of duty for its own sake, commonly called 'conscientiousness.' (4) *The ideal of life*, the highest imperative of conscience. Here the nobility of life, as a whole, the supreme life-purpose, gives meaning and incentive to each and every action. The ideal of life is not, however, something static and completed, given once and for all. It grows with the enlightenment of the individual and the development of humanity. The consciousness of every age comprehends it in certain laws and ends of life. The highest form of the ideal finds its embodiment in what are called noble characters. These ethical heroes rise, in rare and exceptional circumstances, above the ordinary level of

[1] *Ethik*, vol. ii. p. 66. [2] *Idem.*

common morality, gathering up into themselves the entire moral development of the past, and radiating their influence into the remotest distances of the future. They are the embodiments of the conscience of the race, at once the standard and challenge of the moral life of mankind, whose influence awakens the slumbering aspirations of men, and whose creative genius affects the whole history of the world, lifting it to higher levels of thought and endeavour.

The supreme example—unique, however, both in kind and degree, and differing by its uniqueness from every other life which has in some measure approximated to the ideal—is disclosed in Jesus Christ. Thus it is that the moral consciousness of the world generally and of the individual in particular, of which the conscience is the organ and expression, develops from less to more, under the influence of the successive imperatives of conduct, till finally it attains to the vision of the greatness of life as it is revealed in its supreme and all-commanding ideal.[1]

3. Finally, in this connection the question of the *permanence of conscience* may be referred to. Is the ultimate of life a state in which conscience will pervade every department of a man's being, dominating all his thoughts and activities? or is the ideal condition one in which conscience shall be outgrown and its operation rendered superfluous? A recent writer on Christian ethics[2] makes the remarkable statement that where there is no sense of sin conscience has no function, and he draws the inference that where there is complete normality and perfect moral health conscience will be in abeyance. Satan, inasmuch as he lacks all moral instinct, can know nothing of conscience; and, because of His sinlessness, Jesus must also be pronounced conscienceless. Hence the paradox attributed to Machiavelli: 'He who is without conscience is either a Christ or a devil.' But though it is true that the Son of Man had no actual experience of sin, and could not, indeed, feel remorse or contrition, yet in so far as He was man there was in Him

[1] Cf. Wundt, *Ethik*, vol. ii. pp. 67-74.
[2] Lemme, *Christliche Ethik*, vol. i.

the possibility of sin, and in the intimate relation which He bore to the human race He had a most accurate and clear knowledge both of the meaning and consequences of evil. So far from saying that Christ had no conscience, it would be nearer the truth to say that He had a perfect conscience, a personality and fullness of consciousness which was a complete reflection of, and harmony with, the highest conceivable good. The confusion of thought into which Professor Lemme seems to fall is due, we cannot help thinking, to the too restricted and negative signification he gives to conscience. Conscience is not merely the faculty of reproving and approving one's own conduct when brought into relation with actual sin. It is involved in every moral judgment. A good conscience is not only the absence of an evil one. It has also a positive sanctioning value. The 'ought' of life is constantly present. It is the whole man ever conscious of, and confronted by, his ideal self. The conscience participates in man's gradual progress and enlightenment; so far from the individual growing towards a condition in which self-judgment ceases, he is progressing rather in moral discernment, and becoming more and more responsive to the will of Him whose impress and image he bears upon his soul.

The tendency of modern physiological accounts of conscience has been to undermine its authority and empty life of its responsibility, but no theory of the origin of conscience must be permitted to invalidate its judgments. If conscience has any moral worth it is that it contains the promise and witness of God. The prime question is, What is the nature of its testimony? According to the teaching of Scripture it bears witness to the existence of a higher than man—to a divine Person with whom he is spiritually akin and to whom he is accountable.

'God's most intimate presence in the soul.' As the revelation of God's will grows clearer man's ideal becomes loftier. Hence a man's conscience is the measure of his moral life. It reveals God, and in the light of God reveals man to himself. We carry a 'forever' within our bosom,

'ein Gott in unserer Brust,'[1] as Goethe says, which reminds us that even while denizens of this earth we are citizens of heaven and the sharers of an eternal life. Like another John the Baptist, conscience points to one greater than itself. It emphasises the discord that exists between the various parts of man's nature, a discord which it condemns but cannot remove. It can judge, but it cannot compel. Hence it places man before Christ, and bids him yield to the sway of a new transforming power. As one has finely said, 'He who has implanted in every breast such irrefragible testimony to the right, and such unappeasable yearnings for its complete triumph, now comes in His own perfect way to reveal Himself as the Lord of conscience, the Guide of its perplexities, the Strength of its weakness and the Perfecter of its highest hopes.'[2]

[1] *Tasso*, act iii. scene 2. [2] Davidson, *The Christian Conscience*, p. 113.

CHAPTER VI

'THE MIRACLE OF THE WILL'

CLOSELY connected with the conscience as a moral capacity is the power of self-determination, or as it is popularly called—free-will. If conscience is the manifestation of man as knowing, will is more especially his manifestation as a being who acts. The subject which we now approach presents at once a problem and a task. The nature of freedom has been keenly debated from the earliest times, and the history of the problem of the will is almost the history of philosophy. The practical question which arises is whether the individual has any power by which the gulf between the natural and the spiritual can be transcended. Can man choose and decide for a spiritual world above that in which he is by nature involved? The revelation of the good must, indeed, precede the activity of man. But at the same time the change cannot merely happen to him. He cannot simply be a passive recipient. The new life must be taken up by his own activity, and be made his by his own decision and acceptance. This responsive activity on the part of man is the task which life presents to the will.

Much obviously depends upon the answer we are able to give to this question. If man has no power of choice, no capacity of self-determination, and is nothing more than a part of the natural world, then the ethical life is at once ruled out of court.

The difficulties connected with the problem of moral freedom resolve themselves mainly into three: a scientific, a psychological, and a theological.

I. On the part of natural science it is claimed that man is subject, like everything else, to physical necessity.

II. From the psychological standpoint it is urged that man's actions are always determined by the strongest motive.

III. On the theological side it is alleged that human freedom is incompatible with divine Sovereignty. A complete doctrine of freedom would require to be examined in the light of these three objections. For our purpose it will be sufficient to indicate briefly the value of these difficulties, and the manner in which they may be met.

I

The wonderful progress of the natural sciences in the second half of the nineteenth century has tended to banish the old idea of freedom from the realm of experience. Science, it is maintained, clearly shows that man belongs to a great world-movement, in relation to which his whole life and work are completely determined. Though even in earlier ages, and especially in Stoic philosophy, this conception of life was not ignored, it is more particularly in recent times, under the influence of the evolutionary theory, that the idea of determination has been applied with relentless insistence to the structure of the soul. There is, it is alleged, no room for change or spontaneity. Everything, down to the minutest impulse, depends upon something else, and proceeds from a definite cause. The idea of choice is simply the remnant of an unscientific mode of thinking. It might be sufficient to reply that in thus reducing life and experience to a necessary part of a world-whole, more is surrendered than even science is willing to yield. The freedom which some writers reject in the interests of science they attempt to introduce in an altered form. Why are these philosophers so anxious to conserve the ethical consequences of life? Is it not because they feel that there is something in man which will not fit into a rigid world-mechanism, and that conduct would cease

to have moral worth if life were reduced to a causal series of happenings? But it may be further argued that, if the mechanical conception of life, which reduces the spiritual to the natural, were consistently carried out it would lead not merely to the destruction of the moral life, but to the destruction of science itself. If man is merely a part of nature, subject entirely to nature's law, then the realities of the higher life—love, self-sacrifice, devotion to ends beyond ourselves—must be radically re-interpreted or regarded simply as illusions. But it is also true that from this standpoint science itself is an illusion. For if reality lies only in the passing impressions of our sensible nature, the claim of science to find valid truth must end in the denial of the very possibility of knowledge. Does not the very existence of physical science imply the priority of thought? While in one sense it may be conceded that man is a part of nature, does not the truth, which cannot be gainsaid, that he is aware of the fact, prove a certain priority and power which differentiates him from all other phenomena of the universe? If he is a link in the chain of being, he is at least a link which is conscious of what he is. He is a being who knows himself, indeed, through the objective world, but also realises himself only as he makes himself its master and the agent of a divine purpose to which all things are contributing, and for which all things exist. In all our reasoning and endeavour we must start from the unity of the self-conscious soul. Whatever we can either know or achieve, is *our* truth, *our* act presented in and through our self-consciousness. It is impossible for us to conceive any standard of truth or object of desire outside of our experience. As a thinking and acting being man pursues ends, and has the consciousness that they are his own ends, subject to his own choice and control. It is always the self that the soul seeks; and the will is nothing else than the man making and finding for himself another world.

The attempt has recently been made to measure mental states by their physical stimuli and explain mental pro-

cesses by cerebral reaction. It is true that certain physical phenomena seem to be invariably antecedent to thought, but so far science has been unable to exhibit the form of nexus between these physical antecedents and ideas. Even if the knowledge of the topography of the brain were immeasurably more advanced than it now is, even though we could observe the vast network of nerve-fibres and filaments of which the brain is composed, and could discern the actual changes in brain-cells under nerve stimulations, we should still be a long way off from understanding the nature and genesis of ideas which can only be known to us as immediate in their own quality. All that we can ever affirm is that a certain physical excitation is the antecedent of thought. It is illegitimate to say that it is the 'cause' of thought; unless, indeed, the word 'cause' be invested with no other meaning than that which is involved in such a conception. It is, however, in a very general way only, and within an exceedingly narrow range, that such measurement is possible. We do not even know at present what nerves correspond to the sensations of heat and cold, pain and joy; and all attempts to localise will-centres have proved unavailing.

The finer and more delicate feelings cannot be gauged. But even though the alleged parallelism were entirely demonstrated, the immediate and pertinent question would still remain, Who or what is the investigator? Is it an ego, a thinking self? or is it only a complex of vibrations or mechanical impressions bound together in a particular body which, for convenience, is called an ego? Are the so-called entities—personality, consciousness, self—but symbols, as Professor Mach says, useful in so far as they help us to express our physical sensations, but which with further research must be pronounced illusions?[1] Monistic naturalism, which would explain all psychical experiences in terms of cerebral action, must not be allowed to arrogate to itself powers which it does not possess, and quietly brush

[1] Mach, *Erkenntniss und Irrtum*, Vorwort. See also *Die Analyse der Empfindungen*, p. 20. '*Das Sich ist unrettbar*,' he says.

aside facts which do not fit into its system. The moral sanctions so universally and deeply rooted in the consciousness of mankind, the feelings of responsibility, of guilt and regret; the soul's fidelities and heroisms, its hopes and fears, its aims and ideals—the poetry, art, and religion that have made man what he is, all that has contributed to the uplifting of the world—are, to say the least, unaccounted for, if it must be held that 'man is born in chains.' Primary facts must not be surrendered nor ultimate experiences sacrificed in the interests of theoretic simplicity. In the recent anti-metaphysical movement of Germany, of which Haeckel, Avenarius, Oswald and Mach are representatives, there is presented the final conflict. It is not freedom of will only that is at stake, it is the very existence of a spiritual world. 'Es ist der Kampf um die Seele.' [1]

If the world forms a closed and 'given' system in which every particular is determined completely by its position in the whole, then there can be no place for spontaneity, initiative, creation, which all investigation shows to be the distinctive feature in human progress and upward movement. So far from its being true that the world makes man, it would be nearer the truth to say that man makes the world. A 'given' world can never be primary.[2] There must be a mind behind it. We fall back, therefore, upon the principle which must be postulated in the whole discussion—the unity and self-determining activity of the self-conscious mind.

II

We may now proceed to the second problem of the will, the objection that human action is determined by motives, and that what we call freedom is nothing else than the necessary result of the pressure of motives upon the will. In other words, the conduct of the individual is always determined by the strongest motive. It will be seen on examination that this objection is just another form of that which we have already considered. Indeed, the

[1] Cf. W. Schmidt, *Der Kampf um die Seele*, p. 13. [2] Cf. Eucken.

analogy of mechanical power is frequently applied to the motives of the will. Diverse motives have been compared to different forces which meet in one centre, and it is supposed that the result in action is determined by the united pressure of these various motives. Now it may be freely admitted at the outset that the individual never acts except under certain influences. An uninfluenced man, an unbiassed character cannot exist. Not for one moment do we escape the environment, material and moral, which stimulates our inner life to reaction and response. It is not contended that a man is independent of all motives. What we do affirm is that the self-realising potentiality of personality is present throughout. Much of the confusion of thought in connection with this subject arises from a false and inadequate notion of personality. Personality is the whole man, all that his past history, present circumstances and future aims have made him, the result of all that the world of which he is a part has contributed to his experience. His bodily sensations, his mental acts, his desires and motives are not detached and extraneous forces acting on him from without, but elements which constitute his whole being. The person, in other words, is the visible or tangible phenomenon of something inward—the phase or function by which an individual agent takes his place in the common world of human intercourse and interaction, and plays his peculiar and definite part in life.[1] But this totality of consciousness, so far from reducing man to a 'mere manufactured article,' gives to personality its unique distinction. By personality all things are dominated. 'Other things exist, so to speak, for the sake of their kind and for the sake of other things: a person is never a mere means to something beyond, but always at the same time an end in himself. He has the royal and divine right of creating law, of starting by his exception a new law which shall henceforth be a canon and a standard.'[2]

[1] Cf. Wallace, *Logic of Hegel, Proleg.*, p. 233.

[2] Wallace, *Idem*, p. 235. Cf. Aristotle's wise man whose conduct is not κατὰ λόγον but μετὰ λόγου.

The objection to the freedom of the will which we are now considering may be best appreciated if we examine briefly the two extreme theories which have been maintained on the subject. On the one hand, *determinism* or, as it is sometimes called, necessitarianism, holds that all our actions are conditioned by law—the so-called motive that influences a man's conduct is simply a link in a chain of occurrences of which his act is the last. The future has no possibilities hidden in its womb. I am simply what the past has made me. My circumstances are given, and my character is simply the necessary resultant of the natural forces that act upon me. On the other hand, *indeterminism*, or libertarianism, insists upon absolute liberty of choice of the individual, and denies that necessity or continuity determines conduct. Of two alternatives both may now be really possible. You can never predict what will be, nor lay down absolutely what a man will do. The world is not a finished and fixed whole. It admits of infinite possibilities, and instead of the volition I have actually made, I could just as easily have made a different one.

Without entering upon a detailed criticism of these two positions, it may be said that both contain an element of truth and are not so contradictory as they seem. On the one hand, all the various factors of the complex will may seem to be determined by something that lies beyond our control, and thus our will itself be really determined. But, on the other hand, moral continuity in its last analysis is only a half truth, and must find its complement in the recognition of the possibilities of new beginnings. The very nature of moral action implies, as Lotze has said, that new factors may enter into the stream of causal sequence, and that even though a man's life may be, and must be, largely conditioned by his circumstances, his activity may be really originative and free. What the determinists seem to forget is, as Green says, that 'character is only formed through a man's conscious presentation to himself of objects as *his* good, as that in which his self-satisfaction is found.' [1]

[1] *Proleg.*, § 108.

Desires are always for objects which have a value for the individual. A man's real character is reflected in his desires, and it is not that he is moved by some outside abstract force, which, being the strongest, he cannot resist, but it is because he puts *himself* into the desire or motive that it becomes the strongest, the one which he chooses to follow. My motives are really part of myself, of which all my actions are the outcome. Human desires, in short, are not merely external tendencies forcing a man this way or that way. They are a part of the man himself, and are always directed towards objects related to a self; and it is the satisfaction of self that makes them desirable.

On the other hand, the fallacy lurking in the libertarian view arises from the fact that it also makes a hard and fast distinction between the self and the will. The indeterminists speak as if the self had amongst its several faculties a will which is free in the sense of being able to act independently of all desires and motives. But, as a matter of fact, the will, as we have said, is simply the man, and it cannot be separated from his history, his character, and the objects which his character desires. To speak, as people sometimes do in popular language, of being free to do as they like—that is, to be influenced by no motive whatever, is not only an idea absurd in itself, but one which, if pushed to its consequences, would be subversive of all freedom, and consequently of all moral value. 'The liberty of indifference,' if the phrase means anything at all, implies not merely that the agent is free from all external compulsion, but that he is free from himself, not determined even by his own character. And if we ask what it really is that causes him to act, it must be answered, some caprice of the moment, some accidental impulse or arbitrary freak of fancy. The late Professor James makes a valiant attempt to solve the 'dilemma of determinism' by resorting to the idea of 'chance' which he defines as a 'purely relative term, giving us no information about that which is predicated, except that it happens to be disconnected with something else—not controlled, secured or necessi-

tated by other things in advance of its own actual presence.'[1] 'On my way home,' he says, 'I can choose either of two ways'; and suppose 'the choice is made twice over and each time falls on a different street.' 'Imagine that I first walk through Divinity Avenue, and then am set again at the door of this hall just as I was before the choice was made. Imagine then that, *everything else being the same*,[2] I now make a different choice and traverse Oxford Street. Looking outwardly at these universes of which my two acts are a part, can you say which is the impossible and accidental one and which the rational and necessary one?' Perhaps an outsider could not say, but Professor James, if he examined his reasons, could say. He assumes that 'everything else is the same.' But that is just what cannot be. A new factor has been introduced, it may be a whim, a sudden impulse, perhaps even a desire to upset calculation—a something in his character in virtue of which his second choice is different from his first. It is an utter misnomer to call it 'chance.' Even though he had tossed a coin and acted on the throw, his action would still be determined by the kind of man he was.

Let us not seek to defend freedom on inadequate grounds, or contend for a spurious liberty. No view of the subject should indeed debar us from acknowledging 'changes in heart and life,' but a misunderstanding of the doctrine of freedom may tend to paralyse moral initiative. The attempt to sunder the will and the understanding and discover the source of freedom in the realm of the emotions, as the voluntarists seek to do, cannot be regarded as satisfactory or sound philosophy. In separating faith and knowledge the Ritschlian school tends to make subjective feeling the measure of truth and life; while recent psychological experiments in America with the phenomena of faith-healing, hypnotism and suggestion, claim to have discovered hitherto unsuspected potencies of the will. This line of thought has been welcomed by many as a relief from the mechanical theory of life and as a witness to moral

[1] *The Will to Believe*, p. 154.

[2] The italics are ours.

freedom and Christian hope. But so far from proving the sovereignty and autonomy of the will, it discloses rather the possibilities of its abject bondage and thraldom.

No one can doubt the facts which Professor James and others, working from the side of religious psychology, have recently established, or discredit the instances of conversion to which the annals of the Christian life so abundantly testify. But even conversion must not be regarded as a change without motives. There must be some connection between motive, character and act, otherwise the new spiritual experience would be simply a magical happening lacking all moral significance. If there were no continuity of consciousness, if I could be something to-day irrespective of what I was yesterday, then all we signify by contrition, penitence, and shame would have no real meaning. Even the grace of God works through natural channels and human influences. The past is not so much obliterated, as taken up into the new life and transfigured with a new value.

The truth of spontaneity and initiative in life has lately found in M. Bergson a fresh and vigorous advocacy, and we cannot be too grateful to that profound thinker for his reassertion of some neglected aspects of freedom and his philosophical vindication of the doctrine which puts it in a new position of prominence and security. 'Life is Creation.' 'Reality is a perpetual growth, a Creation pursued without end.' 'Our will performs this miracle.' 'Every human work in which there is invention, every movement that manifests spontaneity brings something new into the world. In the composition of the work of genius, as in a simple free decision, we create what no mere assemblage of materials could have given.'[1] But yet he says that 'life cannot create absolutely because it is confronted with matter. . . . But it seizes upon this matter which is necessity itself, and strives to introduce into it the greatest possible amount of indetermination and liberty.'[2] Even Bergson, though he emphasises so strongly immediacy and incalculableness in

[1] *Creative Evolution* (Eng. trans.), p. 252. [2] *Idem*, p. 265.

all human action, cannot deny that the bodily arrangements and mechanisms are at least the basis of the working of the soul. Man cannot produce any change in the world except in strict co-ordination with the forces and qualities of material things. The idea in his consciousness is powerless save in so far as it is a guide to combinations and modifications which are latent in reality. The man who works with his hands does not create out of nothing a new totality. Even genius is conditioned by the elements he works with and upon. He can do nothing with his materials beyond what it is in themselves to yield. This sense of co-operation is strongly marked in the higher grades of activity. The world may be in the making, as Bergson says, but it is being made of possibilities already inherent in it. Life may be incalculable, and you can never know beforehand what a great man, indeed, what any man may achieve, but even the originality of a Leonardo or a Beethoven cannot effect the impossible or contradict the order of nature. The sculptor feels that the statue is already lying in the marble awaiting only his creative touch to bring it forth. The metal is alive in the worker's hands, coaxing him to make of it something beautiful.[1] Purpose does not come out of an empty mind. Freedom and initiative never begin entirely *de novo*. Life is a 'creation,' but it is also, as M. Bergson labours to prove, an 'evolution.' Our ideals are made out of realities. Our heaven must be shaped out of the materials of our earth.

A moral personality is a self-conscious, self-determining being. But that is only half the reality. The other half is that it is a self-determining consciousness *in a world*. As Bergson is careful to tell us, the shape and extent of self-consciousness are determined by our relation to a world which acts upon us and upon which we act. Without a world in which we had personal business we should have no self-consciousness.

The co-operation of spontaneity and necessity is implied

[1] Cf. Morris, *Lects. on Art*, p. 195; Bosanquet, *Hist. of Aesthetic*, p. 445; also *Individuality and Value*, p. 166.

in every true idea of freedom. If a man were the subject of necessity alone he would be merely the creature of mechanical causation. If he had the power of spontaneity only his so-called freedom would be a thing of caprice. Necessity means simply that man is conditioned by the world in which he lives. Spontaneity means, not that he can conjure up at a wish a dream-world of no conditions, but that he is not determined by anything outside of himself, since the very conditions amid which he is placed may be transmuted by him into elements of his own character. Moral decisions are never isolated from ideals and tasks presented by our surroundings. The self cannot act on any impulse however external till the impulse has transplanted itself within and become our motive.

'Our life,' says Eucken, 'is a conflict between fate and freedom, between being "given" and spontaneity. Spiritual individuality does not come to any one, but has first to be won by the work of life, elevating that which destiny brings. . . . The idea of freedom calls man to independent co-operation in the conflict of the worlds. It gives to the simply human and apparently commonplace an incomparable greatness. However powerful destiny may be, it does not determine man entirely: for even in opposition to it there is liberation from it.' [1]

III

It will not be necessary to dwell at any length on the third difficulty—the incompatibility of divine sovereignty and grace with moral personality.

How to reconcile divine power and human freedom is the great problem which meets us on the very threshold of the study of man's relation to God. The solution, in so far as it is possible for the mind, must be sought in the divine immanence. God works through man, and man acts through God. Reason, conscience, and will are equally the testimony to God's indwelling in man and man's in-

[1] *Life's Basis and Life's Ideals*, p. 181 f.

dwelling in God. It is, as St. Paul says, God who worketh in us both to will and to do. But just because of that inherent power, it is we who work out our own character and destiny. The divine is not introduced into human life at particular points or in exceptional crises only. Every man has something of the divine in him, and when he is truest to himself he is most at one with God. The whole meaning of human personality is a growing realisation of the divine personality. God's sovereignty has no meaning except in relation to a world of which He is sovereign, and His purposes can only be fulfilled through human agency. While His thoughts far transcend in wisdom and sublimity those of His creatures they must be in a sense of the same kind—thoughts, in other words, which beings made in His image can receive, love and, in a measure, share. And though God cannot be conceived as the author of evil, He may permit it and work through it, bringing order out of chaos, and evolving through suffering and conflict His sovereign purposes.

The problem becomes acutest when we endeavour to harmonise the antinomy of man's moral freedom and the doctrine of grace. However insoluble the mystery, it is not lessened by denying one side in the interest of unity. Scripture boldly affirms both truths. No writer insists more strenuously than the Apostle Paul on the sovereign election of God, yet none presents with greater fervour the free offer of salvation. In his ethical teaching, at least, Paul is no determinist. Freedom is the distinctive note of his conception of life. Life is a great and solemn trust committed to each by God, for the use or abuse of which every man will be called to account. His missionary zeal would have no meaning if he did not believe that men were free to accept or refuse his message. Paul's own example, indeed, is typical, and while he knew that he was 'called,' he knew, too, that it lay with him to yield himself and present his life as a living sacrifice to God. Jesus, too, throughout His ministry, assumed the ability of man freely to accept His call to righteousness, and though He speaks

of the change as a 'new birth,' a creation from above, beyond the strength of man to effect, He invariably makes His appeal to the will—'Follow Me,' 'Come unto Me.' He assumes in all His dealings with individuals that they have the power of decision. And so far from admitting that the past could not be undone, and no chain of habit broken, the whole purpose of His message and lifework was to proclaim the need and possibility of a radical change in life. So full of hope was He for man that He despaired of none, not even of those who had most grievously failed, or most utterly turned their back on purity. The parables in the Third Gospel of the lost coin, the lost sheep, and the lost son lay emphasis upon the possibility of recovery, and, in the case of the prodigal, specially on the ability to return for those who have gone astray.

The teaching of Scripture implies that while God is the source of all spiritual good, and divine grace must be present with and precede all rightful action of the human will, it rests with man to respond to the divine love. No human soul is left destitute of the visiting of God's spirit, and however rudimentary the moral life may be, no bounds can be set to the growth which may, and which God intends should, result wherever the human will is consentient. While, therefore, no man can claim merit in the sight of God, but must acknowledge his absolute dependency upon divine grace, no one can escape loss or blame if he wilfully frustrates God's design of mercy. Whatever mystery may attend the subject of God's sovereign grace, the Bible never presents it as negating the entire freedom of man to give or withhold response to the gift and leading of the divine spirit.

In the deepest New Testament sense to be free is to have the power of acting according to one's true nature. A man's ideal is his true self, and all short of that is for him a limitation of freedom. Inasmuch as no ideal is ever completely realised, true freedom is not so much a possession as a progressive appropriation. It is at once a gift and a task. It contains the twofold idea of emancipation

and submission. Mere deliverance from the lower self is not liberty. Freedom must be completed by the appropriation of the higher self and the acceptance of the obligations which that self involves. It is to be acquired through submission to the truth. 'Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.' A man is never so free as when he is the bondsman of Christ. The saying of St. Paul sums up the secret and essence of all true freedom: 'The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.'

SECTION C

CHARACTER

CHAPTER VII

MODERN THEORIES OF LIFE

BEARING in mind the three fundamental ideas lying at the root of all ethical inquiry—End, Norm, and Motive—we have now to deal with the shaping forces of the Christian life, the making of character. In this section, therefore, we shall be engaged in a discussion of the ideals, laws, and springs of moral action. And first, What is the supreme good? What is the highest for which a man should live? This question determines the main problem of life. It forces itself irresistibly upon us to-day, and the answer to it is the test of every system of morals.

But before endeavouring to determine the distinctively Christian ideal, as presented in the teaching of Jesus and interpreted by the growing Christian consciousness of mankind, it may be well to review briefly some of the main theories of life which are pressing their claims upon our attention to-day. Many of these modern views have arisen as a reaction against traditional religion. From the seventeenth century onwards, and especially during the nineteenth, there has been a growing disposition to call in question the Christian conception of life. The antagonism reveals itself not only in a distrust of all forms of religion, but also in a craving for wider culture. The old certitudes fail to satisfy men who have acquired new habits of reflection, and there is a disinclination to accept a scheme of life which seems to narrow human interests and exclude such departments as science, art, and politics. One reason of this change is to be found in the wonderful advance of science during the last century. Men's minds, withdrawn

from primary, and fixed upon secondary causes, have refused to believe that the order of nature can be disturbed by supernatural intervention. Whether the modern antipathy to Christianity is justified is not the question at present before us. We may see in the movements of our day not so much a proof that the old faith is false, as an indication that if Christianity is to regain its power a radical re-statement of its truths, and a more comprehensive application of its principles to life as a whole must be undertaken.

In the endeavour to find an all-embracing ideal of life two possibilities present themselves, arising from two different ways of viewing man. Human life is in one aspect receptive; in another, active. It may be regarded as dependent upon nature for its maintenance, or as a creative power whose function is not merely to receive what nature supplies, but to re-shape nature's materials and create a new spiritual world. Receptivity and activity are inseparable, and form together the harmonious rhythm of life.

But there has ever been a tendency to emphasise one or other of these aspects. The question has constantly arisen, Which is the more important for life—what we receive or what we create? Accordingly two contrasted conceptions of life have appeared—a naturalistic and an idealistic. Under the first we understand those theories which place man in the realm of sense and explain life by material conditions; under the second we group such systems as give to life an independent creative power.

I

Naturalistic Tendency

1. Naturalism has usually taken three forms, an idyllic or poetic, a philosophic, and a scientific, of which Rousseau, Feuerbach, and Haeckel may be chosen as representatives.

(1) According to Rousseau, man is really a part of nature.

and only as he conforms to her laws and finds his satisfaction in what she gives can he be truly happy. Nature is the mother of us all, and only as we allow her spirit to pervade and nourish our being do we really live. The watchword, 'back to nature' may be said to have given the first impulse to the later call of the 'simple life,' which has arisen as a protest against the luxury, ostentation, and artificiality of modern times.

(2) The philosophical form of naturalism, as expounded by Feuerbach, inveighs against an idealistic interpretation of life. The author of *The Essence of Christianity* started as a disciple of Hegel, but soon reversed the Hegelian principle, and pronounced the spiritual world to be a fiction of the mind. Man belongs essentially to the earth, and is governed by his senses. Self-interest is his only motive, and egoism his sole law of life. It was only what might be expected, that the ultimate consequences of this philosophy of the senses should be drawn by a disciple of Feuerbach, Max Stirner,[1] in whose work, *The Individual and His Property*, the virtues of egoism are extolled, and contempt is poured upon all disinterestedness and altruism.

(3) The latest form of naturalism is the scientific or monistic, as represented by Haeckel. It may be described as scientific in so far as its author professes to deduce the moral life from biological principles. In the chapter[2] devoted to Ethics in his work, *The Riddle of the Universe*, his pronouncements upon morality are not scientifically derived, but simply dogmatically assumed. The underlying principle of monism is that the universe is a unity in which no distinction exists between the material and the spiritual. In this world as we know it there reigns only one kind of law, the invariable law of nature. The so-called spiritual life of man is not an independent realm having its own rights and aims; it belongs wholly to nature. The moral world is a province of the physical, and the key to all the departments of reality is to be found in science

[1] Kasper Schmidt, *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum.*
[2] Haeckel, *op. cit.*, chap. xix.

alone. The doctrine of evolution is brought into the service of monism, and the attempt is made to prove that in the very process of biological development human thought, moral sentiment, and social instincts have been evolved. With a curious sacrifice of consistency, Haeckel does not agree with Feuerbach in exalting egoism to the place of supremacy in the moral life. He recognises two kinds of duty—duty to self and duty to society. The social sense once created is permanent, and rises to ever-fresh developments. But benevolence, like every other obligation, is, according to evolutionary monism, a product evolved from the battle of existence. Traced to its source, it has its spring in the physical organism, and is but an enlargement of the ego.[1]

The monistic naturalism of Haeckel offers no high ideal to life. Its Ethics is but a glorified egoism. Its dictates never rise above the impulses derived from nature. But not religion only with its kingdom of God, nor morality only with its imperatives, nor art with its power of idealising the world of nature, but even science itself, with its claim to unify and organise facts, proves that man stands apart from, and is higher than, the material world. The very existence of such activities in the invisible realm renders vain every attempt to reduce the spiritual to the natural, and to make truth, goodness and beauty mere outgrowths of nature.

2. On its ethical side naturalism is closely associated with the theory of life which bears the name of *utilitarianism* —the theory which regards pleasure or profit as the aim of man. In its most independent form Hedonism can hardly be said to exist now as a reasoned theory. Carried out to its extreme consequences it reduces man to a mere animal. Hence a type of reflective egoism has taken the place of animal gratification, and the idea of ulterior benefit has succeeded to that of immediate pleasure.

The names associated with this theory of morals are those of Hobbes, Bentham, and the two Mills. Hobbes,

[1] Haeckel, *op. cit.*, chap. xix. p. 140.

who preaches undiluted egoism,[1] may be regarded as the father of utilitarianism. But the title was first applied to the school of Bentham.[2] Bentham's watchword was 'utility' expressed in his famous formula—'The greatest happiness of the greatest number.' While renouncing the abstract ideal of equality, he yet asserted the equal claim of every individual to happiness. In its distribution 'each is to count for one, and no one for more than one.' Hence Bentham insisted upon an exact quantitative calculation of the consequences of our actions as the only sufficient guide to conduct. The end is the production of the maximum of pleasure and the minimum of pain.

J. S. Mill modified considerably the principle of utility by introducing the doctrine of the qualitative difference in pleasures.[3] While Bentham assumed self-interest as the only motive of conduct, Mill affirmed the possibility of altruism in the motive as well as in the end or criterion of right actions.[4] Thus the idea of utility was extended to embrace higher moral ends. But the antithesis between the 'self' and the 'other' was not overcome. To introduce the notion of sympathy, as Adam Smith and others did, is to beg the question. Try as you will, you cannot deduce benevolence from selfishness. The question for the utilitarian must always arise, 'How far ought I to follow my natural desires, and how far my altruistic?' There must be a constant conflict, and he can only be at peace with himself by striking a balance. The utilitarian must be a legalist. The principle of self-sacrifice does not spring from his inner being. Truth, love, sacrifice—all that gives to man his true worth as a being standing in vital relation to God—are only artificial adaptations based on convenience and general advantage.

3. Evolutionary ethics, as expounded by Spencer and others, though employing utilitarian principles, affords an ampler and more plausible account of life than early

[1] Hobbes' *Leviathan*, chap. vi.
[2] Cf. Pringle-Pattison, *Philos. Radicals*, and J. Seth's *Eng. Philosophers*, p. 240.
[3] *Utilitarianism*. chap. ii. [4] *Idem*, chap. iii.

Hedonism.[1] The evolutionists have enriched the idea of happiness by quietly slipping in many ends which really belong to the idea of the 'good.' As the term 'gravitation' was the magic word of the eighteenth century, so the word 'evolution' is the talisman of the present age. It must be admitted that it is a sublime and fruitful idea. It explains much in nature and history which the old static notion failed to account for. It has a great deal to teach us even in the spiritual sphere. But when applied to life as a whole, and when it is assumed to be the sole explanation of moral action, it is apt to rob the will of its initiative and reduce all moral achievements to merely natural factors in an unfolding drama of life. The soul itself, with all its manifestations and experiences, is treated simply as the resultant and harmonious effect of adaptation to environment. Man is regarded as the highest animal, the most richly specialised organism—the last of a long series in the development of life, the outstanding feature of which is the acquired power of complete adjustment to the world, of which it is a part. Strictly speaking, there is no room for a personal God in this mechanical theory of the universe. The world becomes inevitably 'the Be all and the End all.' Hence, as might be expected, while evolutionary Ethics claims to cover the whole range of this present life, it does not pretend to extend into the regions of the hereafter. It is concerned only with what it conceives to be the highest earthly good—the material and social well-being of mankind. But no theory of life can be pronounced satisfactory which explains man in terms of this earth alone. The 'Great Unknown' which Mr. Spencer posits[2] as the ultimate source of all power, is a force to be reckoned with; and, known or unknown, is the mightiest factor in all life's experiences. Man's spiritual nature in its whole range cannot be treated as of no account. 'The powers of the world to come' have an essential bearing upon human

[1] Cf. Spencer, *Data of Ethics*, p. 275; also *Social Statics*. In the former work an attempt is made to exhibit the biological significance of pleasure and the relation between egoism and altruism.

[2] See *First Principles*, p. 166 ff.

conduct in this world. They shape our thoughts and determine our ideals. Hence any view of life which excludes from consideration the spiritual side of man, and limits his horizon by the things of this earth must of necessity be inadequate and unsatisfactory.

4. Closely connected with, and, indeed, arising out of, the evolutionary theory, another type of thought, prevalent to-day, falls to be noted—*the socialistic tendency*. It is now universally recognised that the individual cannot be treated as an isolated being, but only in relation to society of which he is a part. The emphasis is laid upon the solidarity of mankind, and man is explained by such social facts as heredity and environment. Marx and Engels, the pioneers of the socialistic movement, accepted in the fullest sense the scientific doctrine of evolution. So far from being a mere Utopian dream, Marx contends that Socialism is the inevitable outcome of the movement of modern society. The aim of the agitation is to bring men to a clear consciousness of a process which is going forward in all countries where the modern industrial methods prevail. Democracy must come to itself and assume its rights. The keynote of the past has been the exploitation of man by man in the three forms of slavery, serfdom, and wage-labour. The keynote of the future must be the exploitation of the earth by man *associated to man*. The practical aim of Socialism is that industry is to be carried on by associated labourers jointly owning the means of production. Here, again, the all-pervading ideal is—the general good of society—the happiness of the greatest number. The reduction of all aims to a common level, the equalising of social conditions, the direction and control of all private interests and personal endeavours, are to be means to one end—the material good of the community. Socialism is not, however, confined to an agitation for material welfare. The industrial aspect of it is only a phase of a larger movement. On its ethical side it is the outcome of a strong aspiration after a higher life.[1] The world is awakening to

[1] See Kirkup, *An Inquiry into Socialism*, p. 19.

the fact that the majority of the human family has been virtually excluded from all participation in man's inheritance of knowledge and culture. The labouring classes have been from time immemorial sunk in drudgery and ignorance, bearing the burden of society without sharing in its happiness. It is contended that every man ought to have an opportunity of making the most of his life and obtaining full freedom for the development of body and mind. The aim to secure justice for the many, to protect the weak against the strong, to mitigate the fierceness of competition, to bring about a better understanding between capital and labour, and to gain for all a more elevated and expansive existence, is not merely consistent with, but indispensable to, a true Christian conception of life. But the question which naturally arises is, how this reformation is to be brought about. Never before have so many revolutionary schemes been proposed, and so many social panaceas for a better world set forth. It is, indeed, a hopeful sign of the times that the age of unconcern is gone and the temper of cautious inaction has yielded to scientific diagnosis and courageous treatment. It must not be forgotten, however, that the exclusively utilitarian position tends to lower the moral ideal, and that the exaggerated emphasis upon the social aspect of life fails to do justice to the independence of the individual. The tendency of modern political thought is to increase the control of government, and to regard all departments of activity as branches of the state, to be held and worked for the general good of the community. Thus there is a danger that the individual may gradually lose all initiative, and life be impoverished under a coercive mechanical system.

Socialism in its extreme form might easily become a new kind of tyranny. By the establishment of collectivism, by making the state the sole owner of all wealth, the sole employer of labour, and the controller of science and art, as well as of education and religion, there is a danger of crushing the spiritual side of man, and giving to all life and endeavour a merely naturalistic character and content.

5. It was inevitable that an exaggerated insistence upon the importance of society should provoke an equally one-sided emphasis upon the worth of the individual, and that as a protest against the demands of Socialism there should arise a form of subjectivism which aims at complete self-affirmation.

(1) This tendency has received the name of *æsthetic-individualism*. As a conception of life it may be regarded as intermediate between naturalism and idealism. While rooted in a materialistic view of life, it is moulded in the hands of its best advocates by spiritual aspirations. Its standpoint may be characterised as a theory of existence which seeks the highest value of life in the realm of the beautiful, and which therefore endeavours to promote the supreme good of the individual through devotion to art. Not only does the cultivation of art tend in itself to elevate life by concentrating the soul upon all that is fairest and noblest in the world, but the best means of enriching and ennobling life is to regard life itself as a work of art. This view of existence, it is claimed, widens the scope of experience, and leads us into ampler worlds of interest and enjoyment. It aims at giving to personality a rounded completeness, and bringing the manifold powers and passions of man into harmonious unity. As a theory of life it is not new. Already Plato, and still more Aristotle, maintained that a true man must seek his highest satisfaction not in the possession of external things, but in the most complete manifestation of his faculties. Individual æstheticism largely animated the Romantic movement of Germany at the beginning of last century. But probably the best illustration of it is to be found in Goethe and Schiller; while in our country Matthew Arnold has given it a powerful and persuasive exposition. It was the aim of Goethe to mould his life into a work of art, and all his activities and poetic aspirations were subordinated to this end. The beautiful harmonious life is the true life, the well-rounded whole from which must be banished everything narrow, vulgar, and distasteful, and in which every-

thing fair and noble must find expression. 'Each individual,' says Schiller, 'is at once fitted and destined for a pure ideal manhood.' And the attainment of this ideal requires from us the most zealous self-culture and a concentration of effort upon our own peculiar gifts.[1]

A new form of æstheticism has lately appeared which pretends to combine morality and culture. 'The New Ethic,'[2] as it is called, protests against the sombreness of religious traditions and the rigidity of moral restrictions, and assigns to art the function of emancipating man and idealising life. But what this movement really offers under its new catchword is simply a subtler form of epicureanism, a finer self-indulgence. It is the expression of a desire to be free from all restraint, to close one's eyes to the 'majesty of human suffering,' allowing one's thoughts to dwell only upon the agreeable and gay in life. It regards man as simply the sum-total of his natural inclinations, and conceives duty to be nothing else than the endeavour to bring these into equilibrium.

That the æsthetic culture of life is a legitimate element in Christian morality can hardly be denied by any one who has pondered the meaning in all its breadth of the natural simplicity and spiritual beauty of the manifestation of the Son of Man. The beautiful, the good, and the true are intimately connected, and constitute together all that is conceivably highest in life. Christian Ethics ought to include everything that is gracious and fair; and any theory of life that has no room for joy and beauty, for laughter and song, for appreciation of artistic or poetic expression, is surely deficient. But it is one thing to acknowledge these things; it is another to make them the whole of existence. We live in a world in which much else besides beauty and joy exists, and it is not by shirking contact with the unlovely phases of experience, but by resolutely accepting the ministry of sorrow they impose,

[1] See Lütgert, *Natur und Geist Gottes*, for striking chapter on Göethe's Ethik, p. 121 f.

[2] Cf. Eucken, *Main Currents of Modern Thought*, p. 401 f.

that we attain to our highest selves. The narrow Puritanism of a past age may need the corrective of the broader Humanism of to-day, but not less must the Ethic of self-culture be reinforced by the Ethic of self-sacrifice. We may not cultivate the beauty of life at the cost of duty, nor forget that it is often only through the immolation of self that the self can be realised.

(2) While the Romantic movement, of which Goethe was the most illustrious representative, did much to enlarge life and ennoble the whole expanse of being, its extreme subjectivism and aristocratic exclusiveness found ultimate expression (*a*) in the pessimism of Schopenhauer, and the arrogance of Nietzsche. The alliance between art and morality was dissolved. The imagination scorned all fetters and, in its craving for novelty and contempt of convention, became the organ of individual caprice and licence. In Nietzsche—that strange erratic genius—at once artist, philosopher, and rhapsodist—this philosophy of life found brilliant if bizarre utterance. If Schopenhauer reduces existence to nothing, and finds in oblivion and extinction its solution, (*b*) Nietzsche seeks rather to magnify life by striking the note of a proud and defiant optimism. He claims for the individual limitless rights ; and, repudiating all moral ties, asserts the complete sovereignty of the self-sufficing ego. With a deep-rooted hatred of the prevailing tendencies of civilisation, he combines a vehement desire for a richer and unrestrained development of human power. He would not only revalue all moral values, but reverse all ideas of right and wrong. He would soar ' beyond good and evil,' declaring that the prevailing judgments of mankind are pernicious prejudices which have too long tyrannised over the world. He acknowledges himself to be not a moralist, but an ' immoralist,' and he bids us break in pieces the ancient tables of the Decalogue. Christianity is the most debasing form of slave-morality. It has made a merit of weakness and servility, and given the name of virtue to such imbecilities as meekness and self-sacrifice. He calls upon the individual to exalt himself. The man of

the future is to be the man of self-mastery and virile force, 'the Superman,' who is to crush under his heel the cringing herd of weaklings who have hitherto possessed the world. The earth is for the strong, the capable, the few. A mighty race, self-assertive, full of vitality and will, is the goal of humanity. The vital significance of Nietzsche's radicalism lies less in its positive achievement than in its stimulating effect. Though his account of Christianity is a caricature, his strong invective has done much to correct the sentimental rose-water view of the Christian faith which has been current in some pietistic circles. The Superman, with all its vagueness, is a noble, inspiring ideal. The problem of the race is to produce a higher manhood, to realise which there is need for sacrifice and courage. Nietzsche is the spiritual father and forerunner of the Eugenics. The Superman is not born, he is bred. Our passions must be our servants. Obedience and fidelity, self-discipline and courage are the virtues upon which he insists. 'Be master of life. . . .' 'I call you to a new nobility. Ye shall become the procreators and sowers of the future.'

While there is much that is suggestive in Nietzsche's scathing criticisms, and many passages of striking beauty in his books, he is stronger in his denials than his affirmations, and it is the negative side that his followers have fastened upon and developed. Sudermann, the novelist, has carried his philosophy of egoism to its extreme. This writer, in a work entitled *Sodom's End*, affirms that there is nothing holy and nothing evil. There is no such thing as duty or love. Only nerves exist. The 'Superman' becomes a monster. Such teaching can scarcely be taken seriously. It conveys no helpful message. It is the perversion of life's ideal.

As a passing phase of thought it is interesting, but it solves no problems; it advances no truths. It resembles a whirlwind which helps to clear the air and drive away superfluous leaves, but it does little to quicken or expand new seeds of life.

II

Idealistic Tendency

1. Modern Idealism was inaugurated by Kant. Kant's significance for thought lies in his twofold demand for a new basis of knowledge and morality. He conceived that both are possible, and that both are interdependent, and have but one solution. The solution, however, could only be achieved by a radical change of method, and by the introduction of new standards of value. Kant's theory of morals was an attempt to reconcile the two opposing ethical principles which were current in the eighteenth century. On the one side, the Realists treated man simply as a natural being, and accordingly demanded a pursuance of his natural impulses. On the other side, the Dogmatists conceived that conduct must be governed by divine sanctions. Both theories agreed in regarding happiness as the end of life; the one the happiness of sensuous enjoyment; the other, that of divine favour. Both set an end outside of man himself as the basis of their ethical doctrine. Kant was dissatisfied with this explanation of the moral life. The question, therefore, which arises is, Whence comes the idea of duty which is an undeniable fact of our experience? If it came merely from without, it could never speak to us with absolute authority, nor claim unquestioning obedience. That which comes from without depends for its justification upon some consequence external to our action, and must be based, indeed, upon some excitement of reward or pain. But that would destroy it as a moral good; since nothing can be morally good that is not pursued for its own sake. Kant, therefore, seeks to show that the law of the moral life must originate within us, must spring from an inherent principle of our own rational nature. Hence the distinctive feature of Kant's moral theory is the enunciation of the 'Categorical Imperative'—the supreme inner demand of reason. From this principle of autonomy there arise at once the notions of man's freedom and the law's univer-

sality. Self-determination is the presupposition of all morality. But what is true for one is true for all. Each man is a member of a rational order, and possesses the inalienable independence and the moral dignity of being an end in himself. Hence the formula of all duty is, 'Act from a maxim at all times fit to be a universal law.'

It is the merit of Kant that he has given clear expression to the majesty of the moral law. No thinker has more strongly asserted man's spiritual nature or done more to free the ideal of duty from all individual narrowness and selfish interest. But Kant's principle of duty labours under the defect, that while it determines the form, it tells us nothing of the content of duty. We learn from him the grandeur of the moral law, but not its essence or motive-power. He does not clearly explain what it is in the inner nature of man that gives to obligation its universal validity or even its dominating force. As a recent writer truly says, 'In order that morality may be possible at all, its law must be realised *in* me, but while the way in which it is realised is mine, the content is not mine; otherwise the whole conception of obligation is destroyed.' [1] If the soul's function is purely formal how can we attain to a self-contained life? Moreover, if the freedom which Kant assigns to man is really to achieve a higher ideal and bring forth a new world, must there not be some spiritual power or energy, some dynamic force, which, while it is within man, is also without, and independent of, him? 'Duty for duty's sake' lacks lifting power, and is the essence of legalism. Love, after all, is the fulfilling of the law.

2. To overcome the Kantian abstraction, and give content to the formal law of reason was the aim of the idealistic writers who succeeded him. Fichte conceived of morality as action—self-consciousness realising itself in a world of deeds. Hegel started with the *Idea* as the source of all reality, and developed the conception of Personality attaining self-realisation through the growing consciousness of the world and of God. Personality involves capacity. The

[1] Macmillan, *The Crowning Phase of the Critical Philosophy*, p. 28.

law of life, therefore, is, 'Be a person and respect others as persons.'[1] Man only comes to himself as he becomes conscious that his life is rooted in a larger self. Morality is just the gradual unfolding of an eternal purpose whose whole is the perfection of humanity. It has been objected that the idea of life as an evolutionary process, which finds its most imposing embodiment in the system of Hegel, if consistently carried out, destroys all personal motive and self-determining activity, and reduces the history of the world to a soulless mechanism. Hegel himself was aware of this objection, and the whole aim of his philosophy was to show that personality has no meaning if it be not the growing consciousness of the infinite. The more recent exponents of his teaching have endeavoured to prove that the individual, so far from being suppressed, is really *expressed* in the process, that, indeed, while the universal life underlies, unifies, and directs the particular phases of existence, the individual in realising himself is at the same time determining and evolving the larger spiritual world—a world already implicitly present in his earliest consciousness and first strivings. The absolute is indeed within us from the very beginning, but we have to work it out. Hence life is achieved through conflict. The universe is not a place for pleasure or apathy. It is a place for soul-making. No rest is to be found by an indolent withdrawal from the world of reality. 'In one way or another, in labour, in learning, and in religion, every man has his pilgrimage to make, his self to remould and to acquire, his world and surroundings to transform. . . . It is in this adventure, and not apart from it, that we find and maintain the personality which we suppose ourselves to possess *ab initio*.'[2] The soul is a world in itself; but it is not, and must not be treated as, an isolated personality impervious to the mind of others. At each stage of its evolution it is the focus and expression of a larger world. A man does not value himself as a detached subject, but as the

[1] Hegel, *Phil. of Right*, p. 45.
[2] Bosanquet, *The Principles of Individuality and Value*.

inheritor of gifts which are focused in him. Man, in short, is a trustee for the world; and suffering and privation are among his opportunities. The question for each is, How much can he make of them? Something above us there must be to make us do and dare and hope, and the important thing is not one's separate destiny, but the completeness of experience and one's contribution to it.[1]

3. It was inevitable that there should arise a reaction against the extreme Intellectualism of Hegel and his school, and that a conception of existence which lays the emphasis upon the claims of practical life should grow in favour. The pursuit of knowledge tended to become merely a means of promoting human well-being.

The first definite attempt to formulate a specific theory of knowledge with this practical aim in view takes the form of what is known as 'Pragmatism.' The modern use of this term is chiefly connected with the name of the late Professor James, to whose brilliant writings we are largely indebted for the elucidation of its meaning. 'Pragmatism,' says James, 'represents the empiricist attitude both in a more radical and less objectionable form than it has ever yet assumed.'[2] It agrees with utilitarianism in explaining practical aspects, and with positivism in disdaining useless abstractions. It claims to be a method rather than a system of philosophy. And its method consists in bringing the pursuit of knowledge into close relationship with life. Nothing is to be regarded as true which cannot be justified by its value for man. The hypothesis which on the whole works best, which most aptly fits the circumstances of a particular case, is true. The emphasis is laid not on absolute principles, but on consequences. We must not consider things as they are in themselves, but in their reference to the good of mankind. It is useless, for example, to speculate about the existence of God. If the hypothesis of a deity works satisfactorily, if the best results follow for the moral well-being of humanity by believing in a God,

[1] Bosanquet, *The Principles of Individuality and Value.*
[2] *Pragmatism*, p. 51.

then the hypothesis may be taken as true. It is true at least for us. Truth, according to Pragmatism, has no independent existence. It is wholly subjective, relative, instrumental. Its only test is its utility, its workableness.

This view of truth, though supported by much ingenuity and brilliance, would seem to contradict the very idea of truth, and to be subversive of all moral values. If truth has no independent validity, if it is not something to be sought for itself, irrespective of the inclinations and interests of man, then its pursuit can bring no real enrichment to our spiritual being. It remains something alien and external, a mere arbitrary appendix of the self. It is not the essence and standard of human life. If its sole test is what is advantageous or pleasant it sinks into a merely utilitarian opinion or selfish bias. 'Truth,' says Eucken, 'can only exist as an end in itself. Instrumental truth is no truth at all.' [1]

According to this theory, moreover, truth is apt to be broken up into a number of separate fragments without correlation or integrating unity. There will be as many hypotheses as there are individual interests. The truth that seems to work best for one man or one age may not be the truth that serves another. In the collision of opinions who is to arbitrate? If it be the institutions and customs of to-day, the present state of morals, that is to be the measure of what is good, then we seem to be committed to a condition of stagnancy, and involved in the quest of a doubtful gain.

As might be expected, Professor James's view of truth determines his view of the world. It is pluralistic, not monistic; melioristic, not optimistic. It is characteristic of him that when he discusses the question, Is life worth living? his answer practically is, 'Yes, if you believe it is.' Pragmatism is put forward as the mediator between two opposite tendencies, those of 'tender-mindedness' and 'tough-mindedness.' 'The tendency to rest in the Absolute is the characteristic mark of the tender-minded; the

[1] *Main Currents of Thought*, p. 78.

radically tough-minded, on the other hand, needs no religion at all.'[1] There is something to be said for both of these views, James thinks, and a compromise will probably best meet the case. Hence, against these two ways of accepting the universe, he maintains the pragmatic faith which is at once theistic, pluralistic, and melioristic. He accepts a personal power as a workable theory of the universe. But God need not be infinite or all-inclusive, for 'all that the facts require is that the power should be both other and larger than our common selves.'[2] Such a conception of God, even on James's own admission, is akin to polytheism. And such polytheism implies a pluralistic view of the universe. The invisible order, in which we hope to realise our larger life, is a world which does not grow integrally in accordance with the preconceived plan of a single architect, 'but piecemeal by the contributions of its several parts.'[3] We make the world to our will, and 'add our fiat to the fiat of the creator.' With regard to the supreme question of human destiny Professor James's view is what he calls 'melioristic.' There is a striving for better things, but what the ultimate outcome will be, no one can say. For the world is still in the making. Life is a risk. It has many possibilities. Good and evil are intermingled, and will continue so to be. It is a pluralistic world just because the will of man is free, and predetermination is excluded. If good was assured as the final goal of ill, and there was no sense of venture, no possibility of loss or failure, then life would lack interest, and moral effort would be shorn of reality and incentive.

In Professor James's philosophy of life there is much that is original and stimulating, and it draws attention to facts of experience and modes of thought which we were in danger of overlooking. It has compelled us to consider the psychological bases of personality, and to lay more stress upon the power of the will and individual choice in the determining of character and destiny. It is pre-eminently

[1] *Pragmatism*, p. 278 f.; also *Varieties of Relig. Experience*, p. 525 f.
[2] *Idem*, p. 299. [3] *Idem*, p. 290.

a philosophy of action, and it emphasises an aspect of life which intellectualism was prone to neglect—the function of personal endeavour and initiative in the making of the world. It postulates the reality of a living God who invites our co-operation, and it encourages our belief in a higher spiritual order which it is within our power to achieve.

Pragmatism has hitherto made headway chiefly in America and Britain, but on its activistic side it is akin to a new philosophical movement which has appeared in France and Germany. The name generally given to this tendency is 'Activism' or 'Vitalism'—a title chosen probably in order to emphasise the self-activity of the personal consciousness directed towards a world which it at once conquers and creates. The authors of this latest movement are the Frenchman, Henri Bergson, and the German, Rudolf Eucken. Differing widely in their methods and even in their conclusions, they agree in making a direct attack both upon the realism and the intellectualism of the past, and in their conviction that the world is not a 'strung along universe,' as the late Professor James puts it, but a world that is being made by the creative power and personal freedom of man. While Eucken has for many years occupied a position of commanding influence in the realm of thought, Bergson has only recently come into notice. The publication of his striking work, *Creative Evolution*, marks an epoch in speculation, and is awakening the interest of the philosophical world.[1]

4. With his passion for symmetry and completeness Bergson has evolved a whole theory of the universe, resort-

[1] The writer regrets that the work of the Italian, Benedetto Croce, *Philosophy of the Practical, Economic and Ethic* (Part II. of *Philosophy of the Spirit*), came to his knowledge too late to permit a consideration of its ethical teaching in this volume. Croce is a thinker of great originality, of whom we are likely to hear much in the future, and whose philosophy will have to be reckoned with. Though independent of others, his view of life has affinities with that of Hegel. He maintains the doctrine of development of opposites, but avoids Hegel's insistence upon the concept of nature as a mode of reality opposed to the spirit. Spirit is reality, the whole reality, and therefore the universal. It has two activities, theoretic and practical. With the theoretic man understands the universe; with the practical he changes it. The Will is the man, and freedom is finding himself in the Whole.

ing, strange to say, to a form of reasoning that implies the validity of logic, the instrument of the intellect which he never wearies of impugning. Without entering upon his merely metaphysical speculations, we fix upon his theory of consciousness—the relation of life to the material world—as involving certain ethical consequences bearing upon our subject. The idea of freedom is the corner-stone of Bergson's system, and his whole philosophy is a powerful vindication of the independence and self-determination of the human will. Life is free, spontaneous, creative and incalculable; determined neither by natural law nor logical sequence. It can break through all causation and assert its own right. It is not, indeed, unrelated to matter, since it has to find its exercise in a material world. Matter plays at once, as he himself says, the rôle of obstacle and stimulus.[1] But it is not the world of things which legislates for man; it is man who legislates for it. Bergson's object is to vindicate the autonomy of consciousness, and his entire philosophy is a protest against every claim of determinism to dominate life. By introducing the creative will before all development, he displaces mechanical force, and makes the whole evolution of life dependent upon the 'vital impulse' which pushes forward against all obstacles to ever higher and higher efficiency. Similarly, by drawing a distinction between intellect and intuition, he shows that the latter is the truly creative power in man which penetrates to the heart of reality and shapes its own world. Intellect and instinct have been developed along divergent lines. The intellect has merely a practical function. It is related to the needs of action.[2] It is the faculty of manufacturing artificial objects, especially tools to make tools.[3] It deals with solids and geometrical figures, and its instrument is logic. But according to Bergson it has an inherent incapacity to deal with life.[4] When we contrast the rigidity and superficiality of intellect with the fluidity, sympathy and intimacy of intuition, we see at once wherein

[1] *Hibbert Journal*, April 1912.
[2] *Evol. Creat.*, p. 161.
[3] *Idem*, p. 146.
[4] *Idem*, p. 165.

lies the true creative power of man. Development, when carried too exclusively along the lines of intellect, means loss of will-power; and we have seen how, not individuals alone, but entire nations, may be crushed and destroyed by a too rigid devotion to mechanical and stereotyped methods of thought. Only life is adequate to deal with life. Let us give free expression to the intuitive and sympathetic force within us, 'feel the wild pulsation of life,' if we would conquer the world and come to our own. 'The spectacle,' says Bergson, 'of life from the very beginning down to man suggests to us the image of a current of consciousness which flows down into matter as into a tunnel, most of whose endeavours to advance . . . are stopped by a rock that is too hard, but which, in one direction at least, prove successful, and break out into the light once more.'[1] But there life does not stop.

> 'All tended to mankind,
> But in completed man begins anew
> A tendency to God.'[2]

This creative consciousness still pushes on, giving to matter its own life, and drawing from matter its nutriment and strength. The effort is painful, but in making it we feel that it is precious, more precious perhaps than the particular work it results in, because through it we have been making ourselves, 'raising ourselves above ourselves.' And in this there is the true joy of life—the joy which every creator feels—the joy of achievement and triumph. Thus not only is the self being created, but the world is being made—original and incalculable—not according to a preconceived plan or logical sequence, but by the free spontaneous will of man.

The soul is the creative force—the real productive agent of novelty in the world. The strange thing is that the soul creates not the world only, but itself. Whence comes this mystic power? What is the origin of the soul? Bergson does not say. But in one passage he suggests that

[1] *Hibbert Journal.* [2] Browning.

possibly the world of matter and consciousness have the same origin—the principle of life which is the great prius of all that is and is to be. But Bergson's 'élan vital,' though more satisfactory than the first cause of the naturalist, or the 'great unknown' of the evolutionist, or even than some forms of the absolute, is itself admittedly outside the pale of reason—inexplicable, indefinable, and incalculable.

The new 'vitalism' unfolds a living self-evolving universe, a restless, unfinished and never-to-be-finished development—the scope and goal of which cannot be foreseen or explained. An infinite number of possibilities open out; *which* the soul will follow no one can tell; why it follows this direction rather than that, no one can see. There seems to be no room here for teleology or purposiveness; and though Bergson has not yet worked out the theological and ethical implications of his theory, as far as we can at present say the personality and imminence of a Divine Being are excluded. Though Bergson never refers to Hegel by name, he seems to be specially concerned in refuting the philosophy of the Absolute, according to which the world is conceived as the evolution of the infinite mind. If 'tout est donné,' says Bergson, if all is given beforehand, 'why do over again what has already been completed, thus reducing life and endeavour to a mere sham.' But even allowing the force of that objection, the idea of a 'world in the making,' though it appeals to the popular mind, is not quite free from ambiguity. In one sense it states a platitude—a truth, indeed, which is not excluded from an absolute or teleological conception of life. But if it is implied that the world, because it is in process of production, may violate reason and take some capricious form, the idea is absurdly false, so long as we are what we are, and the human mind is what it is. The real must always be the rational. All enterprise and effort are based on the faith that we belong to a rational world. Though we cannot predict what form the world will ultimately take, we can at least be sure that it can assume no character which will

contradict the nature of intelligence. Even in the making of a world, if life has any moral worth and meaning at all, there must be rational purpose. There are creation and initiative in man assuredly, but they must not be interpreted as activities which deviate into paths of grotesque and arbitrary fancy. Our actions and ideas must issue from our world. Even a poem or work of art must make its appeal to the universal mind ; any other kind of originality would wholly lack human interest and sever all creation and life from their root in human nature. But at least we must acknowledge that Bergson has done to the world of thought the great service of liberating us from the bonds of matter and the thraldom of a fatalistic necessity. It is his merit that he has lifted from man the burden of a hard determinism, and vindicated the freedom, choice, and initiative of the human spirit. If he has no distinctly Christian message, he has at least disclosed for the soul the possibility of new beginnings, and has shown that there is room in the spiritual life, as the basis of all upward striving, for change of heart and conversion of life.

5. In the philosophy of Eucken there is much that is in harmony with that of Bergson ; but there are also important differences. Common to both is a reaction against formalism and intellectualism. Neither claims that we can gain more than 'the knowledge of a direction' in which the solution of the problem may be sought. It is not a 'given' or finished world with which we have to do. 'The triumph of life is expressed by creation,' says Eucken, 'I mean the creation of self by self.' 'We live in the conviction,' he says again, 'that the possibilities of the universe have not yet been played out,[1] but that our spiritual life still finds itself battling in mid-flood with much of the world's work still before us.' While Bergson confines himself rigidly to the metaphysical side of thought, Eucken is chiefly interested in the ethical and religious aspects of life's problem. Moreover, while there is an absence of a distinctly teleological aim in Bergson, the purpose and ideal

[1] *Die Geistigen Strömungen der Gegenwart*, p. 10.

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of life are prominent elements in Eucken. Notwithstanding his antagonism to intellectualism, the influence of Hegel is evident in the absolutist tendency of his teaching. Life for Eucken is fundamentally spiritual. Self-consciousness is the unifying principle. Personality is the keynote of his philosophy. But we are not personalities to begin with: we have the potentiality to become such by our own effort. He bids us therefore forget ourselves, and strive for our highest ideal—the realisation of spiritual personality. The more man 'loses his life' in the pursuit of the ideals of truth, goodness, and beauty the more surely will he 'save it.' He realises himself as a personality, who becomes conscious of his unity with the universal spiritual life.

Hence there are two fundamental principles underlying Eucken's philosophy which give to it its distinguishing character. The first is the metaphysical conception of *a realm of Spirit*—an independent spiritual Reality, not the product of the natural man, but communicating itself to him as he strives for, and responds to, it. This spiritual reality underlies and transcends the outward world. It may be regarded as an absolute or universal life—the deeper reality of which all visible things are the expression. The second cardinal principle is the *doctrine of Activism*. Life is action. Human duty lies in a world of strife. We have to contend for a spiritual life-content. Here Eucken has much in common with Fichte.[1] But while Fichte starts with self-analysis, and loses sight of error, care, and sin, Eucken starts with actual conflict, and ever retains a keen sense of these hampering elements. The evil of the world is not to be solved simply by looking down upon the world from some superior optimistic standpoint, and pronouncing it very good. The only way to solve it is the practical one, to leave the negative standing, and press on to the deeper affirmative—the positive truth, that beneath the world of nature there exists a deeper reality of spirit, of which we become participators by the freedom and activity of our lives. We are here to acquire a new spiritual world, but

[1] Cf. *Problem of Life*.

it is a world in which the past is taken up and transfigured. Against naturalism, which acquiesces in the present order of the universe, and against mere intellectualism, which simply investigates it, Eucken never wearies of protesting. He demands, first, a fundamental cleavage in the inmost being of man, and a deliverance from the natural view of things; and he contends, secondly, for a spiritual awakening and an energetic endeavour to realise our spiritual resources. Not by thought but by action is the problem of life to be solved. Hence his philosophy is not a mere theory about life, but is itself a factor in the great work of spiritual redemption which gives to life its meaning and aim.

That which makes Eucken's positive idealism specially valuable is his application of it to religion. Religion has been in all ages the mighty uplifting power in human life. It stands for a negation of the finite and fleeting, and an affirmation of the spiritual and the eternal. This is specially true of the Christian religion. Christianity is the supreme type of religion because it best answers the question, 'What can religion do for life?' But the old forms of its manifestation do not satisfy us to-day. Christianity of the present fails to win conviction principally for three reasons: (1) because it does not distinguish the eternal substance of religion from its temporary forms; (2) because it professes to be the final expression of all truth, thus closing the door against progress of thought and life; and (3) while emphasising man's redemption from evil, it forgets the elevation of his nature towards good. There is a tendency to depreciate human nature, and to overlook the joyousness of life. What is needed, therefore, is the expression of Christianity in a new form—a reconstruction which shall emphasise the positiveness, activity, and joy of Christian morality.[1]

While every one must feel the sublimity and inspiration in this conception of a spiritual world, which it is the task of life to realise, most people will be also conscious of a

[1] Cf. *Life's Basis and Life's Ideal.*

certain vagueness and elusiveness in its presentation. We are constrained to ask what is this independent spiritual life? Is it a personal God, or is it only an impersonal spirit, which pervades and interpenetrates the universe? The elusive obscurity of the position and function which Eucken assigns to his central conception of the *Geistes-Leben* must strike every reader. Even more than Hegel, Eucken seems to deal with an abstraction. The spiritual life, we are told, 'grows,' 'divides,' 'advances'—but it appears to be as much a 'bloodless category' as the Hegelian 'idea,' having no connection with any living subject. God, the Spirit, may exist, indeed Eucken says He does, but there is nowhere any indication of how the spiritual life follows from, or is the creation of, the Divine Spirit. Our author speaks with so great appreciation of Christianity that it seems an ungracious thing to find fault with his interpretation of it. Yet with so much that is positive and suggestive, there are also some grave omissions. In a work that professes to deal with the Christian faith—*The Truth of Religion*—and which indeed presents a powerful vindication of historical Christianity, we miss any philosophical interpretation of the nature and power of prayer, adoration, or worship, or any account, indeed, of the intimacies of the soul which belong to the very essence of the Christian faith. While he insists upon the possibility, nay, the necessity, of a new beginning, he fails to reveal the power by which the great decision is made. While he affirms with much enthusiasm and frankness the need of personal decision and surrender, he has nothing to say of the divine authority and power which creates our choice and wins our obedience. Nowhere does he show that the creative redemptive force comes not from man's side, but ultimately from the side of God. And finally, his teaching with regard to the person and work of Jesus Christ, notwithstanding its tender sympathy and fine discrimination, does less than justice to the uniqueness and historical significance of the Son of Man. With profound appreciation and rare beauty of language he depicts the life of Jesus. 'Seldom,'

says a recent writer, 'has the perfect Man been limned with so persuasive a combination of strenuous thought and gracious word.'[1] 'He who makes merely a normal man of Jesus,' he says, 'can never do justice to His greatness.'[2] Yet while he protests rightly against emptying our Lord's life of all real growth and temptation, and the claim of practical omniscience for His humanity (conceptions of Christ's Person surely nowhere entertained by first-class theologians), he leaves us in no manner of doubt that he does not attach a divine worth to Jesus, nor regard Him in the scriptural sense as the Supreme revelation and incarnation of God. And hence, while the peerless position of Jesus as teacher and religious genius is frankly acknowledged, and His purity, power, and permanence are extolled —the mediatorial and redemptive implicates of His personality are overlooked.

But when all is said, no one can study the spiritual philosophy of Eucken without realising that he is in contact with a mind which has a sublime and inspiring message for our age. Probably more than any modern thinker, Eucken reveals in his works deep affinities with the central spirit of Christianity. And perhaps his influence may be all the greater because he maintains an attitude of independence towards dogmatic and organised Christianity. Professor Eucken does not attempt to satisfy us with a facile optimism. Life is a conflict, a task, an adventure. And he who would engage in it must make the break between the higher and the lower nature. For Eucken, as for Dante, there must be 'the penitence, the tears, and the plunge into the river of Lethe before the new transcendent love begins.' There is no evasion of the complexities of life. He has a profound perception of the contradictions of experience and the seeming paradoxes of religion. For him true liberty is only possible through the 'given,' through God's prevenience and grace: genuine self-realisation is only achievable through a continuous self-dedication to, and incorpora-

[1] Hermann, *Bergson und Eucken*, p. 103.
[2] *The Problem of Life*, p. 152.

tion within, the great realm of spirits ; and the Immanence within our lives of the Transcendent.[1]

In styling the tendencies which we have thus briefly reviewed non-Christian, we have had no intention of disparagement. No earnest effort to discover truth, though it may be inadequate and partial, is ever wholly false. In the light of these theories we are able to see more clearly the relation between the good and the useful, and to acknowledge that, just as in nature the laws of economy and beauty have many intimate correspondences, so in the spiritual realm the good, the beautiful, and the true may be harmonised in a higher category of the spirit. We shall see that the Christian ideal is not so much antagonistic to, as inclusive of, all that is best in the teaching of science and philosophy. The task therefore now before us is to interpret these general conceptions of the highest good in the light of Christian Revelation—to define the chief end of life according to Christianity.

[1] Cf. von Hügel, *Hibbert Journal*, April 1912.

CHAPTER VIII

THE CHRISTIAN IDEAL

THE highest good is not uniformly described in the New Testament, and modern ethical teachers have not always been in agreement as to the chief end of life. While some have found in the teaching of Jesus the idea of social redemption alone, and have seen in Christ nothing more than a political reformer, others have contended that the Gospel is solely a message of personal salvation. An impartial study shows that both views are one-sided. On the one hand, no conception of the life of Jesus can be more misleading than that which represents Him as a political revolutionist. But, on the other hand, it would be a distinct narrowing of His teaching to assume that it was confined to the aspirations of the individual soul. His care was indeed primarily for the person. His emphasis was put upon the worth of the individual. And it is not too much to say that the uniqueness of Jesus' teaching lay in the discovery of the value of the soul. There was in His ministry a new appreciation of the possibilities of neglected lives, and a hitherto unknown yearning to share their confidence. It would be a mistake, however, to represent Christ's regard for the individual as excluding all consideration of social relations. The kingdom of God, as we shall see, had a social and corporate meaning for our Lord. And if the qualifications for its entrance were personal, its duties were social. The universalism of Jesus' teaching implied that the soul had a value not for itself alone, but also for others. The assertion, therefore, that the individual has a value cannot mean that he has a value in isolation.

Rather his value can only be realised in the life of the community to which he truly belongs. The effort to help others is the truest way to reveal the hidden worth of one's own life; and he who withholds his sympathy from the needy has proved himself unworthy of the kingdom.

While the writers of the New Testament vary in their mode of presenting the ultimate goal of man, they are at one in regarding it as an exalted form of *life*. What they all seek to commend is a condition of being involving a gradual assimilation to, and communion with, God. The distinctive gift of the Gospel is the gift of life. 'I am the Life,' says Christ. And the apostle's confession is in harmony with his Master's claim—'For me to live is Christ.' Salvation is nothing else than the restoration, preservation, and exaltation of life.

Corresponding, therefore, to the three great conceptions of Life in the New Testament, and especially in the teaching of Jesus—'Eternal Life,' 'the kingdom of God,' and the perfection of the divine Fatherhood, 'Perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect'—there are three aspects, individual, social, and divine, in which we may view the Christian ideal.

I

Self-realisation is not, indeed, a scriptural word. But rightly understood it is a true element in the conception of life, and may, we think, be legitimately drawn from the ethical teaching of the New Testament.[1] Though the free full development of the individual personality as we conceive it in modern times does not receive explicit statement,[2] still one cannot doubt, that before every man our Lord does present the vision of a possible and perfect self. Christianity does not destroy 'the will to live,' but only the will to live at all costs. Even mediæval piety only inculcated self-mortification as a stage towards a higher

[1] Cf. Troeltsch, *Die Sociallehren d. Christl. Kirchen*, vol. i. p. 37, where the idea of self-worth and self-consecration is worked out.
[2] Wernle, *Beginnings of Christianity*, vol. i. p. 76.

self-affirmation. Christ nowhere condemns the inherent desire for a complete life. The end, indeed, which each man should place before himself is self-mastery and freedom from the world;[1] but it is a mastery and freedom which are to be gained not by asceticism but by conquest. Christ would awaken in every man the consciousness of the priceless worth of his soul, and would have him realise in his own person God's idea of manhood.

The ideal of self-realisation includes three distinct elements:

1. *Life as intensity of being.*—'I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.'[2] 'More life and fuller' is the passion of every soul that has caught the vision and heard the call of Jesus. The supreme good consists not in suppressed vitality, but in power and freedom. Life in Christ is a full, rich existence. The doctrine of quietism and indifference to joy has no place in the ethic of Jesus. Life is manifested in inwardness of character, and not in pomp of circumstance. It consists not in what a man has, but in what he is.[3] The beatitudes, as the primary qualifications for the kingdom of God, emphasise the fundamental principle of the subordination of the material to the spiritual, and the contrast between inward and outward good.[4] Self-mastery is to extend to the inner life of man—to dominate the thoughts and words, and the very heart from which they issue. A divided life is impossible. The severest discipline, even renunciation, may be needful to secure that singleness of heart and strenuousness of aim which are for Jesus the very essence of life. 'Ye cannot serve God and mammon.'[5] In harmony with this saying is the opposition in the Johannine teaching between 'the world' and 'eternal life.'[6] The quality of life indeed depends not upon anything contingent or accidental, but upon an intense inward realisation of blessedness in Christ in comparison with which even

[1] Wernle, *Beginnings of Christianity*, pp. 76 f.
[2] John x. 10.
[3] Luke xii. 15, 16.
[4] Matt. v.
[5] Matt. vi. 24.
[6] 1 John ii. 15.

the privations and sufferings of this world are but as a shadow.[1] At the same time life is not a mere negation, not simply an escape from evil. It is a positive good, the enrichment and intensifying of the whole being by the indwelling of a new spiritual power. 'For me to live is Christ,' says St. Paul. 'This is life eternal,' says St. John, 'that they may know Thee the only true God, and Him whom Thou didst send, even Jesus Christ.'[2]

2. *Life as Expansion of Personality.*—By its inherent power it grows outwards as well as inwards. The New Testament conception of life is existence in its fullest expression and fruitfulness. The ideal as presented by Christ is no anæmic state of reverie or ascetic withdrawal from human interest. It is by the elevation and consecration of the natural life, and not by its suppression, that the 'good' is to be realised. The natural life is to be transformed, and the very body presented unto God as a living sacrifice.[3] So far from Christianity being opposed to the aim of the individual to find himself in a world of larger interests, it is only in the active and progressive realisation of such a life that blessedness consists. Herein is disclosed, however, the defect of the modern ideal of culture which has been associated with the name of Goethe. In Christ's ideal self-sufficiency has no place. While rightly interpreted the 'good' of life includes everything that enriches existence and contributes to the efficiency and completeness of manhood, mere self-culture and artistic expression are apt to become perverted forms of egoism, if not subordinated to the spirit of service which alone can give to the human faculties their true function and exercise. Hence life finds its real utterance not in the isolated development of the self, but in the fullness of personal relationships. Only in response to the needs of others can a man realise his own life. In answer to the young ruler who asked a question 'concerning that which is good,' Christ replied, 'If thou wilt enter into life keep the com-

[1] Luke x. 21; Matt. xi. 28-30; Mark viii. 35; John iii. 15, x. 28, xvii. 2.
[2] John xvii. 3.
[3] Rom. xii. 1.

mandments'; and the particular duties He mentioned were those of the second table of the Decalogue.[1] The abundance of life which Christ offers consists in the mutual offices of love and the interchange of service. Thus self-realisation is attained only through self-surrender.[2] The self-centred life is a barren life. Not by withholding our seed but by flinging it forth freely upon the broad waters of humanity do we attain to that rich fruition which is 'life indeed.'

3. *Life as Eternal Good.*—Whatever may be the accurate signification of the word 'eternal,' the words 'eternal life,' regarded as the ideal of man, can mean nothing else than life at its highest, the fulfilment of all that personality has within it the potency of becoming. In one sense there is no finality in life. 'It seethes with the morrow for us more and more.' But in another sense, to say that the moral life is never attained is only a half truth. It is always being attained because it is always present as an active reality evolving its own content. In Christ we have 'eternal life' now. It is not a thing of quantity but of quality, and is therefore timeless.

> 'We live in deeds not years, in thoughts not breaths,
> In feelings, not in figures on a dial.'[3]

He who has entered into fellowship with God has within him now the essence of 'life eternal.'

But the conception of life derived from, and sustained by, God involves the idea of immortality. 'No work begun shall ever pause for death.'[4] To live in God is to live as long as God. The spiritual man pursues his way through conflict and achievement towards a higher and yet a higher goal, ever manifesting, yet ever seeking, the infinite that dwells in him. All knowledge and quest and endeavour, nay existence itself, would be a mockery if man had 'no forever.' Scripture corroborates the yearnings of the heart and represents life as a growing good which is to attain to ever higher reaches and fuller realisations in the world to

[1] Matt. xix. 17.
[2] Luke xvii. 33; John xii. 25.
[3] Bailey, *Festus*.
[4] Browning.

come. It is the unextinguishable faith of man that the future must crown the present. No human effort goes to waste, no gift is delusive; but every gift and every effort has its proper place as a stage in the endless process.[1]

'There shall never be lost one good! What was shall live as before.'[2]

II

The foregoing discussion leads naturally to the second aspect of the highest Good, the Ideal in its social or corporate form—*the kingdom of God*. Properly speaking, there is no such thing as an individual. As biologically man is only a member of a larger organism, so ethically he can only realise himself in a life of brotherhood and service. It is only within the kingdom of God and by recognition of its social relations that the individual can attain to his own blessedness. Viewed in the light of the mutual relation of its members the kingdom is a brotherhood in which none is ignored and all have common privileges and responsibilities; viewed in the light of its highest good it is the entire perfection of the whole—a hierarchy of interests subordinated to, and unified by, the sovereignty of the good in the person of God.[3]

1. By reason of its comprehensiveness the doctrine of the kingdom has been regarded by many as the most general conception of the ideal of Jesus. 'In its unique and unapproachable grandeur it dwarfs all the lesser heights to which the prophetic hopes had risen, and remains to this day the transcendent and commanding ideal of the possible exaltation of our humanity.'[4] The principles implicitly contained in the teaching of Jesus concerning the kingdom have become the common possessions of mankind, and are moulding the thoughts and institutions of the civilised world. Kant's theory of a kingdom of ends, Comte's idea of Humanity, and the modern conceptions of scientific and

[1] Jones, *Browning as a Philosophical and Religious Teacher*, p. 354.
[2] Abt Vogler.
[3] Cf. Balch, *Introd. to the Study of Christian Ethics*, p. 150.
[4] Newman Smyth, *Christian Ethics*, p. 97.

historical evolution are corroborative of the teaching of the New Testament. Within its conception men have found room for the modern ideas of social and economic order, and under its inspiration are striving for a fuller realisation of the aspirations and hopes of humanity.[1]

Though frequently upon His lips the phrase did not originate with Jesus. Already the Baptist had employed it as the note of his preaching, and even before the Baptist it had a long history in the annals of the Jewish people. Indeed the entire story of the Hebrews is coloured by this conception, and in the days of their decline it is the idea of the restoration of their nation as the true kingdom of God that dominates their hopes. When earthly institutions did not fulfil their promise, and nothing could be expected by natural means, hope became concentrated upon supernatural power. Thus before Jesus appeared there had grown up a mass of apocalyptic literature, the object of which was to encourage the national expectation of a sudden and supernatural coming of the kingdom of heaven. Men of themselves could do nothing to hasten its advent. They could only wait patiently till the set time was accomplished, and God stretched forth His mighty hand.[2]

A new school of German interpretation has recently arisen, the aim of which is to prove that Jesus was largely, if not wholly, influenced by the current apocalyptic notions of His time. Jesus believed, it is said, in common with the popular sentiment of the day, that the end of the world was at hand, and that at the close of the present dispensation there would come suddenly and miraculously a new order into which would be gathered the elect of God. Johannes Weiss, the most pronounced advocate of this view, maintains that Jesus' teaching is entirely eschatological. The kingdom is supramundane and still to come. Jesus did not inaugurate it; He only predicted its advent. Consequently there is no Ethics, strictly so called, in His preach-

[1] Balch, *Introd. to the Study of Christian Ethics*, p. 150.

[2] See Apocalypses of Baruch, Esdras, Enoch, and Pss. of Solomon, and also Daniel and Ezekiel. Cf. E. F. Scott, *The Kingdom and the Messiah*, for Apoc. literature.

ing; there is only an Ethic of renunciation and watchfulness [1]—an *Interimsethik*.

The whole problem resolves itself into two crucial questions: (1) Did Jesus expect a gradual coming of the kingdom, or did He conceive of it as breaking in suddenly by the immediate act of God? and (2) Did Jesus regard the kingdom as purely future, or as already begun?

In answer to the first question, while there are undoubtedly numerous and explicit sayings, too much neglected in the past and not to be wholly explained by mere orientalism, suggesting a sudden and miraculous coming, these must be taken in connection with the many other passages implying a gradual process—passages of deep ethical import which seem to colour our Lord's entire view of life and its purposes. And in answer to the second question, while there are not a few utterances which certainly point to a future consummation, these are not inconsistent with the immediate inauguration and gradual development of the kingdom.

A full discussion of this subject is beyond the scope of this volume.[2] There are, however, two objections which may be taken to the apocalyptic interpretation of Christ's teaching as a whole. (1) As presented by its most pronounced champions, this view seems to empty the person and teaching of Jesus of their originality and universality. It tends to reduce the Son of Man to the level of a Jewish rhapsodist, whose whole function was to encourage His countrymen to look away from the present scene of duty to some future state of felicity, which had no connection with the world of reality, and no bearing upon their present character. It would be surely a caricature to interpret the religion of the New Testament from this standpoint alone to the exclusion of those directly ethical and spiritual prin-

[1] J. Weiss, *Die Predigt Jesu vom Reiche Gottes*. Cf. also Wernle, *Die Anfänge unserer Religion*, who is not so pronounced. Bousset rejects this view, and Titius, in his *N. T. Doctrine of Blessedness*, regards the kingdom of God as a present good. See also Moffatt, *The Theol. of the Gospels*.

[2] Cf. Dobschütz, *The Eschatology of the Gospels*, also Schweitzer, *op. cit.*, and Sanday, *The Life of Christ in Recent Research*, E. Scott, *The Kingdom of God and the Messiah*, and Moffatt, *op. cit.*

ciples in which its originality chiefly appeared, and on which its permanence depends.[1] As Bousset[2] points out, not renunciation but joy in life is the characteristic thing in Jesus' outlook. He does not preach a gloomy asceticism, but proclaims a new righteousness and a new type of duty. He recognises the worth of the present life, and teaches that the world's goods are not in themselves bad. He came as a living man into a dead world, and by inculcating a living idea of God and proclaiming the divine Fatherhood gave a new direction and inner elevation to the expectations of His age, showing the true design of God's revelation and the real meaning of the prophetic utterances of the past. To interpret the kingdom wholly from an eschatological point of view would involve a failure to apprehend the spiritual greatness of the personality with which we are dealing.[3] (2) This view virtually makes Christ a false prophet. For, as a matter of fact, the sudden and catastrophic coming of the kingdom as predicted by the Hebrew apocalyptics did not take place. On the contrary the kingdom of God came not as the Jews expected in a sudden descent from the clouds, but in the slow and progressive domination of God over the souls and social relationships of mankind. In view of the whole spirit of Jesus, His conception of God, and His relation to human life, as well as the attitude of St. Paul to the Parousia, it is critically unsound to deny that Jesus believed in the presence of the kingdom in a real sense during His lifetime.[4]

2. If this conception of the kingdom of God be correct we may now proceed to regard it under three aspects, Present, Progressive, and Future—as a *Gift* immediately bestowed by Jesus, as a *Task* to be worked out by man in the history of the world, and as a *Hope* to be consummated by God in the future.

[1] Cf. Barbour, *A Philos. Study of Chr. Ethics*, p. 184.
[2] 'Jesu predigt in ihrem Gegensatz zum Judenthum.'
[3] Cairns, *Christianity in the Mod. World*, p. 173. See Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, for advocates and opponents of this view, pp. 222 ff. Cf. also Troeltsch, *op. cit.*, vol. i. p. 35.
[4] Cf. Moffatt, *op. cit.*

(1) *The Kingdom as a Present Reality.*—After what has been already said it will not be necessary to dwell upon this aspect. It might be supported by direct sayings of our Lord.[1] But the whole tenor and atmosphere of the Gospels, the uniqueness of Christ's personality, His claim to heal disease and forgive sin, as well as the conditions of entrance, imply clearly that in Jesus' own view the kingdom was an actual fact inaugurated by Him and obtaining its meaning and power from His own person and influence. Obviously He regarded Himself as the bearer of a new message of life, and the originator of a new reign of righteousness and love which was to have immediate application. Christ came to make God real to men upon the earth, and to win their allegiance to Him at once. No one can fail to recognise the lofty idealism of the Son of Man. He carries with Him everywhere a vision of the perfect life as it exists in the mind of God, and as it will be realised when these earthly scenes have passed away; yet it would be truer to say that His interests were in 'first things' rather than in 'last things,' and would be more justly designated Protology than Eschatology.[2] His mission, so far from having an iconoclastic aim, was really to 'make all things new.' He was concerned with the initiation of a new religion, therefore with a movement towards a regeneration of society which would be virtually a reign of God in the hearts of men. 'The kingdom of God is within you.' Not in some spot remote from the world, some beautiful land beyond the skies, but in the hearts and homes, in the daily pursuits and common relationships of life must God rule. The beatitudes, while they undoubtedly refer to a future when a fuller realisation of them will be enjoyed, have a present reference as well. They make the promise of the kingdom a present reality dependent upon the inner state of the recipients. Not in change of environment but in change

[1] Luke iv. 21, xvii. 21; Matt. xii. 28, xi. 2-8, xi. 20; Luke xvi. 16. Cf. also Matt. xiii. 16-17.

[2] Our Lord never uses the word 'final' or 'last' of anything concerning the kingdom. Only in the fourth Gospel do we find the phrase 'the last day.' See art., *Contemporary Review*, Sept. 1912.

of heart does the kingdom consist. The lowly and the pure in heart, the merciful and the meek, the seekers after righteousness and the lovers of peace are, in virtue of their disposition and aspiration, already members.

(2) The kingdom as a *gradual development*.—The inward gift prescribes the outward task. It is a power commanding the hearts of men and requiring for its realisation their response. It might be argued that this call to moral effort presented to the first Christians was not a summons to transform the present world, but to prepare themselves for the destiny that awaited them in the coming age.[1] It is true that watchfulness, patience, and readiness are among the great commands of the New Testament.[2] But admitting the importance of these requirements, they do not militate against the view that Christians were to work for the betterment of the world. Christ did not look upon the world as hopeless and beyond all power of reclaiming; nor did He regard His own or His disciples' ministry within it as without real and positive effects. While His contemporaries were expecting some mighty intervention that would suddenly bring the kingdom ready-made from heaven, He saw it growing up silently and secretly among men. He took his illustrations from organic life. Its progress was to be like the seed hidden in the earth, and growing day and night by its own inherent germinating force. The object of the parables of the sower, the tares, the mustard seed, the leaven, was to show that the crude catastrophic conception of the coming of the kingdom must give place to the deeper and worthier idea of growth—an idea in harmony with the entire economy of God's working in the world of nature. In the parable of the fruit-bearing earth Jesus shows His faith in the growth of the good, and hence in the adaptation of the truth to the human soul. In the parables of the leaven, the light, and salt Jesus illustrates the gradual power of truth to pervade, illumine, and purify the life of humanity. His method of bringing about this

[1] The view of Weiss.
[2] Luke xxi. 19; Matt. xxiv. 13; Mark xiii. 13; 2 Tim. ii. 12.

good is the contagion of the good life. His motive is the sense of the need of men. And His goal is the establishment of the kingdom of love—a kingdom in which all the problems of ambition, wealth, and the relationships of the family, of the industrial sphere, and of the state, are to be transfigured and spiritualised.[1]

It is surely no illegitimate application of the mind of Christ if we see in His teaching concerning the kingdom a great social ideal to be realised by the personal activities and mutual services of its citizens. It finds its field and opportunity in the realm of human society, and is a good to be secured in the larger life of humanity. This ideal, though only dimly perceived by the early Church, has become gradually operative in the world, and has been creative of all the great liberating movements in history. It lay behind Dante's vision of a spiritual monarchy, and has been the inspiring motive of those who, in obedience to Christ, have wrought for the uplifting of the hapless and the down-trodden. It has been the soul of all mighty reformations, and is the source of that conception of a new social order which has begun to mean so much for our generation.

Loyalty to the highest and love for the lowest—love to God and man—these are the marks of the men of all ages who have sought to interpret the mind of Christ. Mutual service is the law of the kingdom. Every man has a worth for Christ, therefore reverence for the personality of man, and the endeavour to procure for each full opportunity of making the most of his life, are at once the aim and goal of the new spiritual society of which Christ laid the foundations in His own life and ministry. Everything that a man is and has, talents and possessions of every kind, are to be used as instruments for the promotion of the kingdom of God.

> 'For life, with all it yields of joy and woe,
> And hope and fear . . .
> Is just our chance o' the prize of learning love.'

[1] King, *The Ethics of Jesus*, p. 143.

(3) But though the reign of God has begun, it has *yet to be consummated*.—There is not wanting in the New Testament an element of futurity and expectancy not inconsistent with, but rather complementary to, the notion of gradual development. The eschatological teaching of Jesus has its place along with the ethical, and may be regarded not as annulling, but rather reinforcing the moral ideals which He proclaimed.[1] There is nothing pessimistic in Christ's outlook. His teaching concerning the last things, while inculcating solemnity and earnestness of life as become those to whom has been entrusted a high destiny, and who know not at what hour they may be called to give an account of their stewardship,[2] bids men look forward with certainty and hope to a glorious consummation of the kingdom. Though many of our Lord's sayings with regard to His second coming are couched in figurative language, we cannot believe that He intended to teach that the kingdom itself was to be brought about in a spectacular or material way. He bids His disciples take heed lest they be deceived by a visible Christ, or led away by merely outward signs.[3] His coming is to be as 'the lightning which cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west'[4]—an emblem not so much of suddenness as of illuminating and convincing, and especially, of progressive force. Not in a visible reign or personal return of the Son of Man does the consummation of the kingdom consist, but in the complete spiritual sovereignty of Christ over the hearts and minds of men. When the same love which He Himself manifested in His life becomes the feature of His disciples; when His spirit of service and sacrifice pervades the world, and the brotherhood of man and the federation of nations everywhere prevail; then, indeed, shall the sign of the Son of Man appear in the heavens, and then shall the tribes of

[1] Mark xiii. 7-31 has been called the 'little Apocalypse' and the hypothesis has been thrown out that a number of verses (fifteen in all) form a document by themselves, 'a fly leaf' put into circulation before the fall of Jerusalem, and really incorporated by the Evangelist himself. See Sanday, art., *Hibbert Journal*, Oct. 1911, and *Life of Christ in Recent Research*.

[2] Matt. xxiv. 42. [3] Matt. xxiv. 23. [4] Matt. xxiv. 27.

the earth see Him coming in the clouds with power and glory.[1]

Jesus does not hesitate to say that there will be a final judgment and an ingathering of the elect from all quarters of the earth.[2] There will be, as the parable of the Ten Virgins suggests, a division and a shut door.[3] But punishment will be automatic. Sin will bring its own consequences. Those only will be excluded at the last who even now are excluding themselves. For Christ is already here, and is judging the world every day. By the common actions of their present life men are being tried; and that which will determine their final relation to Christ will not be their mere perception of His bodily presence, but their moral and spiritual likeness to Him.

Amidst the imperfections of the present men have ever looked forward to some glorious consummation, and have lived and worked in the faith of it. 'To the prophets of Israel it was the new age of righteousness; to the Greek thinkers the world of pure intelligible forms; to Augustine and Dante the holy theocratic state; to the practical thought of our own time the renovated social order. Each successive age will frame its own vision of the great fulfilment; but all the different ideals can find their place in the message of the kingdom which was proclaimed by Jesus.'[4]

There is thus opened to our vision a splendid conception of the future of humanity. It stands for all that is highest in our expectations because it is already expressive of all that is best in our present achievements and endeavours. The final hope of mankind requires for its fulfilment a progressive moral discipline. Only as Christ's twofold command—love to God and love to man—is made the all-pervasive rule of men's lives will the goal of a universally perfected humanity be attained.

[1] Matt. xxiv. 30. [2] Matt. xxiv. 31. [3] Matt. xxv.
[4] E. F. Scott, *The Kingdom and the Messiah*, p. 256.

III

The chief good may be regarded finally in its *divine* aspect—as the endeavour after God-likeness. In this third form of the ideal the two others—the personal and the social—are harmonised and completed. To realise the perfect life as it is revealed in the character and will of God is the supreme aim of man, and it embraces all that is conceivably highest for the individual and for humanity as a whole. This aspiration finds its most explicit expression in the sublime word of Christ—'Be ye perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect.'[1] This commandment, unlike so many generalisations of duty, is no cold abstraction. It is pervaded with the warmth of personality and the inspiration of love. In the idea of Fatherhood both a standard and motive are implied. Because God is our Father it is at once natural and possible for us to be like Him. He who would imitate another must have already within him something of that other. As there is a community of nature which makes it possible for the child to grow into the likeness of its parent, so there is a kinship in man with God to which our Lord here appeals.

1. Among the ethical qualities of divine perfection set forth in scripture for man's imitation *Holiness* stands pre-eminent. God, the perfect being, is the type of holiness, and men are holy in proportion as their lives are Godlike. This conception of holiness is fundamental in the Old Testament. It is summed up in a command almost identical with that of our Lord: 'Be ye holy, for I am holy.'[2] Holiness, as Christianity understands it, is the name for the undimmed lustre of God's ethical perfection. God is 'the Holy one'—the alone 'good' in the absolute sense.[3]

If God's character consists in 'Holiness,' then that quality determines the moral end of man. But holiness, as the most comprehensive name for the divine moral perfection—the pure white light of God's Being—breaks up into the

[1] Matt. v. 48. [2] Lev. iv. 11, xix. 2. [3] Mark x. 18.

separate rays which we designate the special moral attributes. These have been grouped under 'Righteousness' (truth, faithfulness, justice, zeal, etc.), and 'Love' (goodness, pity, mercy, etc.), though they are really but expressions of one individual life.[1]

2. In the New Testament *Righteousness* is almost equivalent to holiness. It is the attribute of God which determines the nature of His kingdom and the condition of man's entrance into it. As comprising obedience to the will of God and the fulfilment of the moral law, it is the basal and central conception of the Christian ideal.[2] It is the keynote of the Pauline Epistles. Life has a supreme sacredness for Paul because the righteousness of God is its end. While righteousness is the distinctive note of the Pauline conception, it is also fundamental in the Ethics of Jesus. It is the ruling thought in the Sermon on the Mount. To be righteous for Jesus simply means to be right and true—to be as one ought to be. But human standards are insufficient. A man must order his life by the divine standard. Jesus is as emphatic as any Old Testament prophet in insisting upon the need of absolute righteousness. That, for all who would share in the kingdom of the good, is to be their ideal—the object of their hunger and thirst. It is a 'good' which is essential to the very satisfaction and blessedness of the soul.[3] It is the supreme desire of the man who would be at peace with God. It involves poverty of spirit, for only those who are emptied of self are conscious of their need. They who, in humility and meekness, acknowledge their sins, are in the way of holiness and are already partakers of the divine nature.

Christ's teaching in regard to righteousness has both a negative and a positive aspect. It was inevitable that He should begin with a criticism of the morality inculcated by the leaders of His day. The characteristic feature of Pharisaism was, as Christ shows, its *externalism*. If a man fulfilled the outward requirements of the law he was re-

[1] Cf. Orr, *Sin as a Problem of To-day*, chap. iii.
[2] Cf. Jacoby, *Neu-testamentliche Ethik*, p. 1.
[3] Matt. v. 3 f.

garded as holy, by himself and others, whatever might be the state of his heart towards God. This outwardness tended to create certain vices of character. Foremost amongst these were (1) *Vanity* or Ostentation. To appear well in the opinion of others was the aim of pharisaic conduct. Along with ostentation appears (2) *Self-complacency.* Flattery leads to self-esteem. He who loves the praise of man naturally begins to praise himself. As a result of self-esteem arises (3) *Censoriousness*, since he who thinks well of himself is apt to think ill of others. As a system Pharisaism was wanton hypocrisy—a character of seeming righteousness, but too often of real viciousness.

But Christ came not to destroy but to fulfil the law.[1] His aim was to proclaim the true principles of righteousness in contrast to the current notions of it. This He proceeds to do by issuing the law in its ideal and perfected form.[2] Hence Jesus unfolds its *positive* content by bringing into prominence the virtues of the godly character as opposed to the pharisaic vices. *Modesty* and *humility* are set over against ostentation and self-righteousness.[3] *Single-minded sincerity* is commended in opposition to hypocrisy.[4] The vice of censoriousness is met by the duty of *self-judgment* rather than the judgment of others.[5]

The two positive features of the new law of righteousness as expounded by Jesus are—*inwardness* and *spontaneity.* The righteousness of the Gospel, so far from being laxer or easier of fulfilment, was actually to exceed that of the Pharisees:[6] (*a*) in *depth and inwardness.* It is not enough not to kill or steal or commit adultery. These commandments may be outwardly kept yet inwardly broken. Something more radical is expected of the man who has set before him the doing of God's will, a righteousness not of appearance but of reality. (*b*) In *freedom and spontaneity.* It is to have its spring in the heart. It is to be a righteousness not of servile obedience, but of willing devotion. The aim of life is no longer the painful effort of the bondsman who

[1] Matt. v. 17. [2] Matt. v. 18. [3] Matt. vi. 1-6.
[4] Matt. vi. 16-18. [5] Matt. vii. 1-5. [6] Matt. v. 20.

strives to perform a distasteful task, but the gladsome endeavour of the son who knows and does, because he loves, his father's will. In the Ethics of the Christian life there is no such thing as mere duty; for a man never fulfils his duty till he has done more than is legally required of him. 'Whosoever shall compel you to go with him one mile, go with him twain.'[1] The 'nicely calculated less or more' is alien to the spirit of him who would do God's will. Love is the fulfilling of the law, and love knows nothing of limits.

3. Thus the holiness of God is manifested not in righteousness only, but in the attribute of *Love*. The human mind can attain to no higher conception of the divine character than that which the word 'love' suggests. The thought is the creation of Christianity. It was the special contribution of one of the innermost circle of Jesus' disciples to give utterance to the new vision of the divine nature which Christ had disclosed—'God is love.'[2] In our Lord's teaching the centre of gravity is entirely changed. The Jewish idea of God is enriched with a fuller content. He is still the Holy One, but the sublimity of His righteousness, though fully recognised, is softened by the gentler radiance of love.[3] Jehovah the Sovereign is revealed as God the Father. Divine righteousness is not simply justice, but goodness manifested in far-reaching activities of mercy and pity and benevolence. A new note is struck in the Ethics of Jesus. A new relationship is established between God and man—a personal filial relationship which entirely alters man's conception of life. To be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect, to be, and embody in life all that love means, that is the sublime aim which Jesus in His own person and teaching sets before the world. As God's love is universal, and His care and compassion world-wide, so, says Christ, not by retaliation or even by the performance of strict justice, but in loving your enemies, in returning good for evil and extending your acts of helpfulness and charity to those 'who know not, care not, think

[1] Matt. v. 41.
[2] 1 John iv. 8, 16.
[3] John xvii. 11; Heb. x. 31; Rev. xv. 4.

not, what they do,' shall ye become the children of your Father, and realise something of that divine pattern of every man which has been shown him on the holy mount.

If the view presented in this chapter of the ethical ideal of Christianity be correct, then the doctrine of an *Interimsethik* advocated by modern eschatologists must be pronounced unsatisfactory as a complete account of the teaching of Jesus.[1] The three features which stand out most clearly in the Ethics of Christ are, Absoluteness, Inwardness, and Universality. It is an ideal for man as man, for all time, and for all men. The personality of God represents the highest form of existence we know; and the love of God is the sublimest attribute we can conceive. But because God is our Father there is a kinship between the divine and the human; and no higher or grander vision of life is thinkable than to be like God—to share that which is most distinctive of the divine Fatherhood—His love of all mankind. Hence Godlikeness involves Brotherhood.[2] In the ideal of love—high as God, broad as the world—the other aspects of the chief good, the individual and the social, are harmonised. In Christian Ethics, the problem of philosophy how to unite the one and the many, egoism and altruism, has been practically solved. The individual realises his life only as he finds himself in others; and this he can only do as he finds himself in God. The first and last word of all morality and religion is summed up in Christ's twofold law of love: 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind; and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.'[3]

[1] Cf. E. Digges La Touche, *The Person of Christ in Modern Thought*, pp. 150 ff.

[2] 1 John iv. 21.

[3] Matt. xxii. 37.

CHAPTER IX

THE STANDARD AND MOTIVE OF THE NEW LIFE

In every system of Ethics the three ideas of End, Norm, and Motive are inseparable. Christian Ethics is unique in this respect that it presents not merely a code of morals, but an ideal of good embodied in a person who is at once the pattern and inspiration of the new life. In this chapter we propose to consider these two elements of the good.

I

Christ as Example.—The value of 'concrete examples' has been frequently recognised in non-Christian systems. In the 'philosopher king' of Plato, the 'expert' of Aristotle, and the 'wise man' of the Stoics we have the imaginary embodiment of the ideal. A similar tendency is apparent in modern theories. Comte invests the abstract idea of 'Humanity' with certain personal perfections for which he claims homage. But what other systems have conceived in an imaginative form only, Christianity has realised in an actual person.

The example of Christ is not a separate source of authority independent of His teaching, but rather its witness and illustration. Word and deed in Jesus are in full agreement. He was what He taught, and every truth He uttered flowed directly from His inner nature. He is the prototype and expression of the 'good' as it exists in the mind of God, as well as the perfect representative and standard of it in human life. In Him is manifested for all time what is meant by the good.

1. If Christ is the normative standard of life it is extremely important to obtain a true perception of Him as He dwelt among men. But too often have theology and art presented a Christ embellished with fantastic colours or obscured by abstract speculations. Recently, however, there has been a revival of interest in the actual life of Jesus. Men are turning wistfully to the life of the Master for guidance in practical matters, and it is beginning to dawn upon the world that the highest ideals of manhood were present in the Carpenter of Nazareth. We must therefore go back to the Gospels if we would know what manner of man Jesus was. The difficulty of presenting the Man Christ Jesus as the eternal example to the world must have been almost insurmountable; and we are at once struck with two remarkable features of the synoptics' portrayal of Him. (1) The writers make no attempt to produce a work of art. They never dream that they are drawing a model for all men to copy. There is no effort to touch up or tone down the portrait. They simply reflect what they see without admixture of colours of their own. Hence the paradox of His personality—the intense humanness and yet the mystery of godliness ever and anon shining through the commonest incidents of His life. (2) Even more remarkable than the absence of subjectivity on the part of the evangelists is the unconsciousness of Jesus that He is being portrayed as an example. We do not receive the impression that the Son of Man was consciously living for the edification of the world. His mental attitude is not that of an actor playing a part, but of a true and genuine man living his own life and fulfilling his own purpose. There is no seeming or display. Goodness to be effectual as an example must be unconscious goodness. We are impressed everywhere with the perfect naturalness and spontaneity of all that Christ did and uttered.[1]

The character of Jesus has been variously interpreted, and it is one of the evidences of His moral greatness that each age has emphasised some new aspect of His person-

[1] Cf. Fairbairn, *The Phil. of the Ch. Religion*, pp. 358 ff.

ality. In a nature so rich and complex it is difficult to fix upon a single category from which may be deduced the manifold attributes of His character. Two conceptions of Jesus have generally prevailed down the centuries. One view interprets His character in terms of asceticism; the other in terms of æstheticism.[1] Some regard Him as the representative of Hebrew sorrow and sacrifice; others see in Him the type of Hellenic joy and geniality. There are passages in Scripture confirmatory of both impressions. On the one hand, there is a whole series of virtues of the passive order which are utterly alien to the Greek ideal; and, on the other hand, there is equally prominent a tone of tranquil gladness, of broad sympathy with, and keen appreciation of, the beautiful in nature and life which contrasts with the spirit of Hebrew abnegation. But, after all, neither of these traits reveals the secret of Jesus. Joy and sorrow are but incidents in life. They have only moral value as the vehicles of a profounder spiritual purpose. To help every man to realise the fullness and perfection of his being as a child of God is the aim of His life and ministry, and everything that furthers this end is gratefully recognised by Him as a good. He neither courts nor shuns pain. Neither joy nor sorrow is for Him an end in itself. Both are but incidents upon the way of holiness and love which He had chosen to travel.

2. Everywhere there was manifest in the life and teaching of Jesus a note of *self-mastery and authority* which impressed His contemporaries and goes far to explain and unify the various features of His personality and influence. It is remarkable to notice how often the word 'power' is applied to Jesus in the New Testament.[2] Whether we regard His attitude to God, or His relation to others, it is this note of quiet strength, of vital moral force which arrests our attention. It will be sufficient to mention in passing three directions in which this quality of power is manifest.

[1] Peabody, *Christ and the Christian Character*, p. 44.
[2] Peabody, *op. cit.*, pp. 53 f.

(1) It is revealed in the consciousness of a *divine mission*. He goes steadily forward with the calmness of one who knows himself and his work. He has no fear or hesitancy. Courage, earnestness, and singleness of purpose mark His career. He is conscious that His task has been given Him by God, and that He is the chosen instrument of His Father's will. Life has a greatness and worth for Him because it may be made the manifestation and vehicle of the divine purpose.

(2) His power is revealed again in the *realisation of Holiness*. Holiness is to be differentiated, on the one hand, from innocence; and, on the other, from sinlessness. Innocence is untried goodness; sinlessness is negative goodness; holiness is achieved and victorious goodness. It was not mere absence of sin that distinguished Jesus. His was a purity won by temptation, an obedience perfected through suffering, a peace and harmony of soul attained not by self-suppression, but by the consecration of His unfolding life to the will of God.

(3) His power is manifested once more in His *Sympathy with man*. His purity was pervasive. It flowed forth in acts of love. He went about doing good, invading the world of darkness and sorrow with light and joy. It is the wealth of His interests and the variety of His sympathy which give to the ministry of the Son of Man its impressiveness and charm. With gladness as with grief, with the playfulness of childhood and the earnestness of maturity, with the innocent festivities and the graver pursuits of His fellowmen, with the cares of the rich and the trials of the poor, He disclosed the most intimate and tender feeling. His parables show that He had an open and observant eye for all the life around Him. To every appeal He responded with an insight and delicacy of consideration which betokened that He Himself had sounded the depths of human experience and knew what was in man. Humour, irony, and pathos in turn are revealed in His human intercourse.

But while Jesus delighted to give of Himself freely He knew also how to withhold Himself. There can be no true

sympathy without restraint. The passive virtues—meekness, patience, forbearance—which appear in the life of Christ are 'not the signs of mere self-mortification, they are the signs of power in reserve. They are the marks of one who can afford to wait, who expects to suffer; and that not because he is simply meek and lowly, but because he is also strong and calm.' [1]

The New Testament depicts Jesus as made in the likeness of men, whose life, though unique in some of its aspects, was in its general conditions normal, passing through the ordinary stages of growth, and participating in the common experiences of mankind. He had to submit to the same laws and limitations of the universe as we have. There was the same call, in His case as in ours, to obedience and endurance. There was the same demand for moral decision. Temptation, suffering, and toil, which mean so much for man in the discipline of character, were factors also in the spiritual development of Christ. Trust, prayer, thanksgiving were exercised by the Son of Man as by others; confession alone had no place in His life.

3. The question has been seriously asked, Can the example and teaching of Jesus be really adopted in modern life as the pattern and rule of conduct? Is there not something strangely impracticable in His Ethics; and, however admirably suited to meet the needs of His own time, utterly inapplicable to the complex conditions of society to-day? On the one hand, Tolstoy would have us follow the example of Jesus to the letter, and rigidly practise the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount, even to the extent of refusing to resist wrong and possess property, and of holding aloof from all culture and enterprise, and the interests of life generally. On the other hand, philosophers like Paulsen and Bradley, perceiving the utter impracticableness of Tolstoy's contentions, yet at the same time recognising his attitude as the only consistent one if the imitation of Christ is to have vogue at all, are convinced that the earthly life of Jesus is not the model of our

[1] Peabody, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

age, and that to attempt to carry out His precepts consistently would be not only impossible but injurious to all the higher interests of humanity.[1]

But this conclusion is based, it seems to us, upon a twofold misapprehension. It is founded upon an inadequate interpretation of the life and teaching of Christ; and also upon a wholly mechanical understanding of the meaning and value of example.

(1) What was Christ's ideal of the Christian life? Was it that of the monk or the citizen?—the recluse who meditates apart on his own salvation, or the worker who enters the world and contributes to the betterment of mankind? Is the kingdom of God a realm apart and separate from all the other domains of activity? Or has Christianity, according to its essence, room within it for an application of its truth to the complex relations and manifold interests of modern life? Both views have found expression in the history of the Church. But there can be little doubt as to which is the true interpretation of the mind of Jesus.[2]

(2) But, again, what is meant by the 'imitation of Christ' has been also misconceived. Imitation is not a literal mechanical copying. To make the character of another your model does not mean that you are to become his mimic or echo. In asking us to follow Him, Christ does not desire to suppress our individuality, but to enrich and ennoble it. When He says, on the occasion of the feet-washing of His disciples, 'I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you,'[3] obviously it was not the outward literal performance, but the spirit of humility and service embodied in the act which He desired His disciples to emulate. From another soul we receive incentives rather than rules. No teacher or master, says Emerson, can

[1] See Paulsen, *System der Ethik*, pp. 56 ff.; also Troeltsch, *op. cit.*, vol. ii. p. 847.

[2] Cf. Ehrhardt, *Der Grundcharacter d. Ethik. Jesu*, p. 110. 'The ascetic element in the ethics of Jesus is its transient, the service of God its permanent element.' Cf. also Strauss, *Leben Jesu*, who speaks of 'the Hellenic quality' in Jesus; also Keim, *Jesus of Nazareth*, and Troeltsch, *op. cit.*, vol. i. pp. 34 ff.

[3] John xiii. 15.

realise for us what is good.[1] Within our own souls alone can the decision be made. We cannot hope to interpret the character of another until there be within our own breasts the same moral spirit from which we believe his conduct to proceed. The very nature of goodness forbids slavish reproduction. Hence there is a certain sense in which the paradox of Kant is true, that 'imitation finds no place at all in morality.'[2] The question, 'What would Jesus do?' as a test of conduct covers a quite inadequate conception of the intimate and vital relations Christ bears to our humanity. 'It is not to copy after Christ,' says a modern writer, 'but to receive His spirit and make it effective—which is the moral task of the Christian.'[3] Christ is indeed our example, but He is more. And unless He were more He could not be so much. We could not strive to be like Him if He were not already within us, the Principle and Spirit of our life, the higher and diviner self of every man.

What is meant, then, by saying that Christ is the ideal character or norm of life is that He represents to us human nature in its typical or ideal form. As we behold His perfection we feel that this is what we were made for, this is the true end of our being. Every one may, in short, see in Him the fulfilment of the divine idea and purpose of man—the conception and end of himself.[4]

II

The Christian Motive.—Rightly regarded Christ is not only the model of the new life, but its motive as well. All the great appeals of the Gospel—every persuasion and plea by which God seeks to awaken a responsive love in the hearts of men—are centred in, and find expression through, the Person and Passion of Christ.

1. The question of motive is a primary one in Ethics.

[1] *Conduct of Life.* [2] *Metaphysics of Ethics*, sect. ii.
[3] Schultz, *Grundriss d. evang. Ethik*, p. 5.
[4] Cf. *Ecce Homo*, chap. x.

If, therefore, we ask, What is the deepest spring of action, what is the incentive and motive power for the Christian? The answer is: (1) the love of God, a love which finds its highest expression in *Forgiveness*. Of all motives the most powerful is the sense of being pardoned. Even when it is only one human being who forgives another, nothing strikes so deep into the human heart or evokes penitence so tender and unreserved, or brings a joy so pure and lasting. It not only restores the old relation which wrong had dissolved; it gives the offender a sense of loyalty unknown before. He is now bound not by law but by honour, and it would be a disloyalty worse than the original offence if he wounded such love again. Thus it is that God becomes the object of reverence and affection, not because He imposes laws upon us but because He pardons and redeems. The consciousness of forgiveness is far more potent in producing goodness than the consciousness of law. This psychological fact lay at the root of Christ's ministry, and was the secret of His hope for man. This, too, is the key to all that is paradoxical, and, at the same time, to all that is most characteristic in St Paul's Gospel. What the Law could not do, forgiveness achieves. It creates the new heart, and with it the new holiness. 'It is not anything statutory which makes saints out of sinful men; it is the forgiveness which comes through the passion of Jesus.' [1]

(2) Next to the motive of forgiveness, and indeed arising from it, is the new consciousness of the *Fatherhood of God*, and the corresponding idea of sonship. This was a motive to which Jesus habitually appealed. He invariably sought not only to create in men confidence in God by revealing His fatherly providence, but also to lift them out of their apathy and thraldom by kindling in their souls a sense of their worth and liberty as sons of God. The same thought is prominent also in the epistles both of St. Paul and St. John. As children of God we are no longer menials and hirelings who do their work merely for pay, and without

[1] This thought has been beautifully worked out by Prof. Denney in *British Weekly*, Jan. 13, 1912.

intelligent interest, but sons who share our Father's possessions and co-operate with Him in His purposes.[1]

(3) Closely connected with the idea of Sonship is that of life as a *Divine Vocation*. Life is a trust, and as the children of God we are called to serve Him with all we have and are. The sense of the vocation and stewardship of life acts as a motive: (*a*) in giving *dignity and stability* to character, saving us, on the one hand, from fatalism, and on the other from fanaticism, and affording definiteness of purpose to all our endeavours; and (*b*) in promoting *sincerity and fidelity* in our life-work. Thoroughness will permeate every department of our conduct, since whatsoever we do in word or deed we do as unto God. All duty is felt to be one, and as love to God becomes its motive the smallest as well as the greatest act is invested with infinite worth. 'All service ranks the same with God.'

(4) Another motive, prominent in the Pauline Epistles, but present also in the eschatological passages of the Synoptics, ought to be mentioned, though it does not now act upon Christians in the same form—*the Shortness and Uncertainty of life*. Our Lord enjoins men to work while it is day for the night cometh; and in view of the suddenness and unexpectedness of the coming of the Son of Man He exhorts to watchfulness and preparedness. A similar thought forms the background of the apostle's conception of life. His entire view of duty as well as his estimate of earthly things are tinged with the idea that 'the time is short,' and that 'the Lord is at hand.' Christians are exhorted, therefore, to sit lightly to all worldly considerations. Our true citizenship is in heaven. But neither the apostle nor his Master ever urges this fact as a reason for apathy or indifference. Life may be brief, but it is not worthless. The thought of life's brevity must not act as an opiate, but rather as a stimulant. If our existence here is short, then there is all the greater necessity that its days should be nobly filled, and its transient opportunities seized and turned into occasions of strenuous service.

[1] Luke xv.

(5) To the considerations just mentioned must be added a cognate truth which has coloured the whole Christian view of life, and has been a most powerful factor in shaping Christian conduct—*the idea of Immortality*. It is not quite correct to say that we owe this doctrine to Christianity alone. Long before the Christian era it was recognised in Egypt, Greece, and the Orient generally. But it was entertained more as a surmise than a conviction. And among the Greeks it was little more than the shadowy speculation of philosophers. Plato, in his *Phædo*, puts into the mouth of Socrates utterances of great beauty and far-reaching import; yet, notwithstanding their sublimity, they scarcely attain to more than a 'perhaps.' Even in Hebrew literature, as we have seen, while isolated instances of a larger hope are not wanting, there is no confident or general belief in an after-life. But what was only guessed at by the ancients was declared as a fact by Christ, and preached as a sublime and comforting truth by the apostles; and it is not too much to say that survival after death is at once the most distinctive doctrine of Christianity and the most precious hope of Christendom. The whole moral temperature of the world, says Jean Paul Richter, has been raised immeasurably by the fact that Christ by His Gospel has brought life and immortality to light. This idea, which has found expression, not only in all the creeds of Christendom, but also in the higher literature and poetry of modern times, has given a new motive to action, has founded a new type of heroism, and nerved common men and women to the discharge of tasks from which nature recoils. The assurance that death does not end existence, but that 'man has forever,' has not only exalted and transfigured the common virtues of humanity; but, held in conjunction with the belief in the divine Fatherhood and human brotherhood, given to life itself a new solemnity and pathos.[1]

2. But if these are the things which actuate men in their service of God and man, can it be legitimately said that the Christian motive is pure and disinterested? It is some-

[1] Cf. Knight, *The Christian Ethic*, p. 36.

what remarkable that two opposite charges have been brought against Christian Ethics.[1] In one quarter the reproach has been made that Christianity suppresses every natural desire for happiness, and inculcates a life of severe renunciation. And with equally strong insistence there are others who find fault with it because of its hedonism, because it rests morality upon an appeal to selfish interests alone.

(1) The first charge is sufficiently met, we think, by our view of the Christian ideal. We have seen that it is a full rich life which Christ reveals and commends. The kingdom of God finds its realisation, not in a withdrawal from human interests, but in a larger and fuller participation in all that makes for the highest good of humanity. It is a caricature of Christ's whole outlook upon existence to represent Him as teaching that this life is an outlying waste, forsaken of God and unblessed, and that the world is so hopelessly bad that it must be wholly renounced. On the contrary, it is for Him one of the provinces of the divine kingdom, and the most trivial of our occupations and the most transient of our joys and sorrows find their place in the divine order. It is not necessary to endorse Renan's idyllic picture of the Galilean ministry to believe that for Jesus all life, its ordinary engagements and activities, had a worth for the discipline and perfecting of character, and were capable of being consecrated to the highest ends. There are, indeed, not a few passages in which the call to self-denial is emphasised. But neither Christ nor His apostles represent pain and want as in themselves efficacious or meritorious. Renunciation is inculcated not for its own sake, but always as a means to fuller realisation. Jesus, indeed, transcends the common antithesis of life. For Him it is not a question as to whether asceticism or non-asceticism is best. Life is for use. It is at once a trust and a privilege. It may seem to some that He chose 'the primrose path,' but if he did so it was not due to an easy-going good-nature. We dare not forget the terrible issues

[1] See Haering, *Ethics of the Christian Life*, p. 190.

He faced without flinching. As Professor Sanday has finely said, 'If we are to draw a lesson in this respect from our Lord's life, it certainly would not be that

> "He who lets his feelings run
> In soft luxurious flow,
> Shrinks when hard service must be done,
> And faints at every woe."

It would be rather that the brightest and tenderest human life must have a stern background, must carry with it the possibility of infinite sacrifice, of bearing the cross and the crown of thorns.' [1]

(2) The second charge, the charge of hedonism, though seemingly opposed to the first, comes into line with it in so far as it is alleged that Christianity, while inculcating renunciation in this world, does so for the sake of happiness in the next. It is contended that in regard to purity of motive the Ethics of Christianity falls below the Ethics of philosophy.[2] This statement, so often repeated, requires some examination.

3. While it may be acknowledged that unselfishness and disinterestedness are the criterion of moral sublimity, it must be noted at the outset that considerable confusion of thought exists as to the meaning of motive. Even in those moral systems in which virtue is represented as wholly disinterested, the motive may be said to reside in the object itself. The maxim, 'Virtue for virtue's sake,' really implies what may be called the 'interest of achievement.' If virtue has any meaning it must be regarded as a 'good' which is desirable. Perseverance in the pursuit of any good implies the hope of success; in other words, of the reward which lies in the attainment of the object desired. The reward sought may not be foreign to the nature of virtue itself, but none the less, the idea of reward is present, and, in a sense, is the incentive to all virtuous endeavour. This is, indeed, implied by a no less rigorous

[1] 'Apocalyptic Element in the Gospels,' *Hibbert Journal*, Oct. 1911.
[2] The question of rewards has been fully discussed by Jacoby, *Neutestamentliche Ethik*, pp. 41 ff.; also Barbour, *op. cit.*, pp. 226 ff.

moralist than Kant. For as he himself teaches, the question, 'What should I do?' leads inevitably to the further question, 'What may I hope?'[1] The end striven after cannot be a matter of indifference, if virtue is to have moral value at all. It must be a real and desirable end—an end which fulfils the purpose of a man as a moral being.

(1) But though Kant insists with rigorous logic that reverence for the majesty of the moral law must be the only motive of duty, and that all motives springing from personal desire or hope of happiness must be severely excluded, it is curious to find that in the second part of his *Critique of Practical Reason* he proceeds, with a strange inconsistency, to make room for the other idea, viz., that virtue is not without its reward, and is indeed united in the end with happiness. Felicity and holiness shall be ultimately one, he says; and, at the last, virtue shall be seen 'to be worthy of happiness,' and happiness shall be the crown of goodness.[2] Thus those philosophers, of whom Kant is typical, who contend for the purity of the moral motive and the disinterested loyalty to the good, bring in, at the end, the notion of happiness, which, as a concomitant or consequence of virtue, cannot fail to be also an active incentive.

(2) When we turn to Christian Ethics we find that here, not less than in philosophical Ethics, the motive lies in the object itself. The end and the motive are really one, and the highest good is to be sought for itself and not for the sake of some ulterior gain. It is true, indeed, that Christianity has not always been presented in its purest form; too often have prudence, fear, other-worldliness been set forth as inducements to goodness, as if the Gospel cared nothing for the disposition of a man, and was concerned only with his ultimate happiness. Even a moralist so acute as Paley bases morality upon no higher ground than enlightened self-interest. But the most superficial reader of the Gospels must see at a glance the wide variance between such a view and that of Christ. Nothing could be further from the spirit of Jesus than to estimate the

[1] Cf. *Kritik d. prakt. Vernunft*, p. 143. [2] Kant, *Idem.*

excellence of an action by the magnitude or the utility of its effects rather than the intrinsic good of its motive. Otherwise He would not have ranked the widow's mite above the gifts of vanity, nor esteemed the tribute of the penitent, not so much for the costliness of her offering, as for the sincerity of affection it revealed. Christ looked upon the heart alone, and the worth of an action lay essentially for Him in its inner quality. Sin resided not merely in the overt act, but even more in the secret desire. A man may be outwardly blameless, and yet not really good. He who remains sober or honest simply because of the worldly advantages attaching to such conduct may obtain a certificate of respectability from society; but, judged by the standard of Christ, he is not truly a moral man. In an age which is too prone to make outward propriety the gauge of goodness, it cannot be sufficiently insisted upon that the Ethic of Christianity is an Ethic of the inner motive and intention, and that, in this respect, it does not fall a whit behind the demand of the most rigid system of disinterested morality.

(*a*) It must, however, be freely admitted that our Lord frequently employs the sanctions both of rewards and penalties. In the time of Christ the idea of reward, so prominent in the Old Testament, still held an important place in Jewish religion, being specially connected with the Messianic Hope and the coming of the kingdom. It was not unnatural, therefore, that Jesus, trained in Hebrew religious modes of thought and expression, should frequently employ the existing conceptions as vehicles of His own teaching; but, at the same time, purifying them of their more materialistic associations and giving to them a richer spiritual content. While the kingdom of God is spoken of as a gift, and promised, indeed, as a reward, the word 'reward' in this connection is not used in the ordinary sense, but 'is rather conceived as belonging to the same order of spiritual experience as the state of heart and mind which ensures its bestowal.'[1] Though Jesus does not

[1] Barbour, *op. cit.*, p. 231.

hesitate to point His disciples to the blessings of heaven which they will receive in the future, these are represented for the most part not as material benefits, but as the intensification and enrichment of life itself.[1]

It was usually the difficulties rather than the advantages of discipleship upon which Jesus first laid stress. He would not that any one should come to Him on false pretences, or without fully counting the cost.[2] Even when He Himself called His original disciples, it was of service and not of recompense He spoke. 'Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.'[3] The privilege consisted not in outward éclat, but in the participation of the Master's own purpose and work. Still, all service carries with it its own reward, and no one can share the mission of Christ without also partaking of that satisfaction and joy which are inseparable from the highest forms of spiritual ministry.[4]

There is, however, one passage recorded by all the Synoptists which seems at first sight to point more definitely to a reward of a distinctly material character, and to one that was to be enjoyed not merely in the future, but even in this present life. When Peter somewhat boastfully spoke of the sacrifice which he and his brethren had made for the Gospel's sake, and asked, 'What shall we have therefor?' Jesus replied, 'Verily, I say unto you, that no man that hath left home, or brethren, or sisters, or mother, or father, or children, or lands, for My sake and the Gospel's sake, but shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses and brethren, sisters and mothers, and children and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.'[5] Now, while this is a promise of wide sweep and large generosity, it is neither so arbitrary nor material as it seems. First, the words, 'with persecutions,' indicate that suffering is not only the very condition of the promise, but indeed an essential part of the reward—an element which would of itself be a true test of the sincerity of the sacrifice.

[1] Matt. v. 12, xix. 21, xxv. 34; Luke vi. 23, xviii. 22; Mark x. 21.
[2] Mark viii. 19; Luke ix. 57.
[3] Mark i. 17, ii. 14.
[4] Luke xxii. 29 f.
[5] Mark x. 28-31; cf. Matt. xix. 27-30.

But, second, even the promise, 'An hundredfold now in this time,' is obviously not intended to be taken in a literal sense, but rather as suggesting that the gain, while apparently of the same nature as the sacrifice, will have a larger spiritual import. For, just as Jesus Himself looked upon all who shared His own devotion as His mother and brethren; so, in the deepest sense, when a man leaves father and mother, renouncing home and family ties for the sake of bringing his fellow-men to God, he seems to be emptying his life of all affectionate relationships, but in reality he is entering into a wider brotherhood; and, in virtue of his ministry of love, is being knit in bonds stronger than those of earthly kinship, with a great and increasing community of souls which owe to him their lives.[1] The promise is no arbitrary gift or bribe capriciously bestowed; it is the natural fruition of moral endeavour. For there is nothing so productive as sacrifice. What the man who yields himself to the service of Christ actually gives is life; and what he gets back, increased an hundredfold, is just life again, his own life, repeated and reflected in the men and women whom he has won to Christ.

In some of His parables Christ employs the analogy of the work-engagement, in which labour and payment seem to correspond. But the legal element has a very subordinate place in the simile. Jesus lifts the whole relationship into a higher region of thought, and transforms the idea of wages into that of a gift of love far transcending the legal claim which can be made by the worker. He who has the bondsman's mind, and works only for the hireling's pay, will only get what he works for. But he who serves from love finds in the service itself that which must always be its truest recompense—the increased power of service, the capacity of larger devotion[2]—'The wages of going on.'[3] In his latest volume Deissmann has pointed out that we can only do justice to the utterances of the New Testament regarding work and wages by examining them *in situ*,

[1] This thought is finely elaborated by Barbour.

[2] Matt. xxv. 21; Luke xix. 17.

[3] Tennyson, *Wages*

amidst their natural surroundings. Jesus and St. Paul spoke with distinct reference to the life and habits of the common people of their day. 'If you elevate such utterances to the level of the Kantian moral philosophy, and reproach primitive Christianity with teaching for the sake of reward, you not only misunderstand the words, but tear them up by the roots.' . . . 'The sordid ignoble suggestions so liable to arise in the lower classes are altogether absent from the sayings of Jesus and His apostles, as shown by the parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard, and the analogous reliance of St. Paul solely upon grace.' [1]

The same inner relation subsists between Sin and Penalty. But here, again, the award of punishment is not arbitrary, but the natural consequence of disobedience to the law of the spiritual life. He who seeks to save his life shall lose it. He who makes this world his all shall receive as his reward only what this world can give. He who buries his talent shall, by the natural law of disuse, forfeit it. Not to believe in Christ is to miss eternal life. To refuse Him who is the Light of the world is to remain in darkness.

(*b*) An examination of the Pauline epistles yields a similar conclusion. St. Paul does not disdain to employ the sanctions of hope and fear. 'Knowing the terrors of the Lord' he persuades men, and 'because of the promises' he urges the Corinthians 'to cleanse themselves and perfect holiness.' But in Paul's case, as in that of our Lord, the charge of hedonism is meaningless. For not only does the conception hold a most subordinate place in his teaching, but the idea loses the sense of merit, and is transmuted into that of a free gift. And in general, in all the passages where the hope of the future is introduced, the idea of reward is merged in the yearning for a fuller life, which the Christian, who has once tasted of its joy here, may well expect in richer measure hereafter.[2]

Enough has been said to clear Christianity of the charge of hedonism. So far from Christian Ethics falling

[1] Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, pp. 316 ff.
[2] See also Eph. vi. 5-8; 1 Cor. iii. 14; Rom. v. 2-5, vi. 23, viii. 16.

below Philosophical Ethics in regard to purity of motive, it really surpasses it in the sublimity of its sanctions. The Kantian idea of virtue tends to empty the obligation of all moral content. Goodness, as the philosopher himself came to see, cannot be represented as a mere impersonal abstraction. Virtue has no meaning except in relation to its ultimate end. And life in union with a personal God, in whose image we have been made, is the end and purpose of man's being. Noble as it may be to live morally without the thought of God, the man who so strives to live does not attain to such a high conception of life as he who lives with God for his object. Motives advance with aims, and the higher the ideal the nobler the incentive. Fear of future punishment and the desire for future happiness may prove effective aids to the will at certain stages of moral development, but ultimately the love of God and the beauty of holiness make every other motive superfluous. Indeed, the reward of the Christian life is such as can only appeal to one who has come to identify himself with the divine will. The Christian man is always entering upon his reward. His joy is his Master's joy. He has no other interest. His reward, both here and hereafter, is not some external payment, something separable from himself; it is wholly conditioned by what he is, and is simply his own growth of character, his increasing power of being good and doing good. And if it be still asked, What is the great inducement? What is it that makes the life of the Christian worth living? The answer can only be—The hope of becoming what Christ has set before man as desirable, of growing up to the stature of perfect manhood, of attaining to the likeness of Jesus Christ Himself. But so far from this being a selfish aim, not to seek one's life in God—to be indifferent to all the inherent blessings and joys involved—would be not the mark of pure disinterestedness, but the evidence, rather, of a lack of appreciation of what life really means. The soul that has caught the vision of God and been thrilled with the grace of the Son of Man cannot but yield itself to the best it knows.

CHAPTER X

THE DYNAMIC OF THE NEW LIFE

In the dynamic power of the new life we reach the central and distinguishing feature of Christian Ethics. The uniqueness of Christianity consists in its mode of dealing with a problem which all non-Christian systems have tended to ignore—the problem of translating the ideal into life. The Gospel not only sets before men the highest good, but it imparts the secret of realising it. The ideals of the ancients were but visions of perfection. They had no objective reality. Beautiful as these old-time visions of 'Good' were, they lacked impelling force, the power to change dreams into realities. They were helpless in the face of the great fact of sin. They could suggest no remedy for moral disease.

Christianity is not a philosophical dream nor the imagination of a few visionaries. It claims to be a new creative force, a power communicated and received, to be worked out and realised in the actual life and character of common men and women.

In this chapter we have to consider the means whereby man is brought into a new spiritual relation with God, and enabled to live the new life as it has been revealed in Christ. This reconciliation implies a twofold movement —a redemptive action on God's part, and an appropriating and determinative response on the part of man.

I

The Divine Power

The urgent problem of the New Testament writers was, How can man achieve that good which has been embodied

in the life and example of Jesus Christ? A full answer to this question would lead us into the realm of dogmatic theology. And therefore, without entering upon details, it may be said at once that the originality of the Gospel lies in this, that it not only reveals the good in a concrete and living form, but discloses the power which makes the good possible in the hitherto unattempted derivation of the new life from a new birth under the influence of the spirit of God. The power to achieve the moral life does not lie in the natural man. No readjustment of circumstances, nor spread of knowledge, is of itself equal to the task of creating that entirely new phenomenon—the Christian character. There must be a cause proportionate to the effect. 'Nothing availeth,' says Paul, 'but a new creature.' This new condition owes its origin to God. It is a life communicated by an act of divine creative activity.

But while this regenerative energy is represented generally as the work of God's spirit, it is more particularly set forth as operating through Christ who is the power of God unto salvation.

There are three great facts in Christ's life with which the New Testament connects the redemptive work of God.

1. *The Incarnation.*—In Christ God shares man's nature, and thus makes possible a union of the divine and human. On its divine side the incarnation is the complete revelation of God in human life, and on the human side it is the supreme expression of the spiritual meaning of human nature itself. Christ saves not by a special act of atonement alone, but emphatically by manifesting in Himself the union of God and man. In view of the fact of the world's sin, the Incarnation, as the revelation of the divine life, includes a gracious purpose. It involves the sacrifice of God, which theologians designate by the theory of *Kenosis*. The Advent was not only the consummation of the religious history of the race; it was also the inauguration of a new era. The Son of Man initiated a new type of humanity, to be realised in increasing fullness as men entered into the meaning of the great revelation. 'He

recapitulated in Himself the long unfolding of mankind.'[1] Hence in the very fact of the word becoming flesh atonement is involved. In Christ God is revealed in the reality of His love and the persistence of His search for man, while man is disclosed in the greatness of his vision and vocation.

2. *The Death of Christ.*—Although already implied in the life, the atonement culminates in the death of Christ. Even by being made in the likeness of men Jesus did not escape from, but willingly took up, the burdens of humanity and bore them as the Son of Man. But His passion upon the cross, as the supreme instance of suffering borne for others, at once illuminated and completed all that He suffered and achieved as man's representative. It is this aspect of Christ's redemptive work upon which St. Paul delights to dwell. And though naturally not so prominent in our Lord's own teaching, yet even there the significance of the Redeemer's death is foreshadowed, and in more than one passage explicitly stated.[2] Here we are in the region of dogmatics, and we are not called upon to formulate a doctrine of the atonement. All that we have to do with is the ethical fact that between man and the new life there lies the actuality of sin, the real source of man's failure to achieve righteousness, and the stumbling-block which must be removed before reconciliation with God the Father can be effected. The act, at once divine and human, which alone meets the case is represented in Scripture as the Sacrifice of Christ. In reference to the efficacy of the sacrifice upon the cross Bishop Butler says : 'How and in what particular way it had this efficacy, there are not wanting persons who have endeavoured to explain ; but I do not find that the Scripture has explained it.'[3] Though, indeed, the fact is independent of any theory, the truth for which the cross stands must be brought by us into some kind of intelligible relation with our view of the world, otherwise it is a piece of magic lying outside of our experience, and

[1] Irenæus, *Contra Haereses*, III. xviii. 1.
[2] Matt. xx. 28 ; John xi. 51 ; Matt. xxvi. 28 ; Mark xiv. 8, 9.
[3] *The Analogy*, part II. chap. v.

having no ethical value for life. At the same time no doctrine has suffered more from shallow theorisings, and particularly by the employment of mechanical, legal, and commercial analogies, than the doctrine of the atonement. The very essence of the religious life is incompatible with the idea of an external transference of goodness from one being to another. Man can be reconciled to God only by an absolute surrender of himself to God. To assimilate this spiritual act to a commercial or legal transaction is to destroy the very idea of the moral life. No explanation, however, can be considered satisfactory which does not safeguard two ideas of a deeply ethical nature—the voluntariness and the vicariousness of Christ's sacrifice. We must be careful to do justice, on the one hand, to the eternal relations in which Christ stands to God; and on the other, to the intimate association with man into which Jesus has entered. It is the task of theology to bring together the various passages of Scripture, and exhibit their systematic connection and relative value for a doctrine of soteriology. For Ethics the one significant fact to be recognised is that in a human life was fulfilled perfect obedience, even as far as death, a perfect obedience that completely met and fully satisfied the demand of the very highest, the divine ideal.

3. *The Resurrection of Christ.*—If the Incarnation naturally issues in the sacrifice unto death, that again is crowned and sealed by Christ's risen life. The Resurrection is the vindication and completion of the Redeemer's work. He who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh was declared to be the Son of God by the Resurrection. It was the certainty that He had risen that gave to His death, in the apostles' eyes, its sacrificial value. This was the ground of St. Paul's conviction that the old order had passed away, and that a new order had been established. 'If Christ be not risen ye are yet in your sins.' In virtue of His ascended life Christ becomes the indwelling presence and living power within the regenerate man. It is in no external way that the Redeemer exerts His influence. He is the principle of life working within the soul. The key

to the new state is to be found in the mystical union of the Christian with the risen Lord. The twofold act of death and resurrection has its analogy in the experience of every redeemed man. Within the secret sanctuary of the human soul that has passed from death to life, the history of the Redeemer is re-enacted. In the several passages which refer to this subject the idea is that the changed life is based upon an ethical dying and rising again with Christ.[1] The Christ within the heart is the vital principle and dynamic energy by which the believer lives and triumphs over every obstacle—the world, sin, sorrow, and death itself. 'I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.'[2] All that makes life, 'life indeed'—an exalted, harmonious, and joyous existence—is derived from union with the living Lord, who has come to be what He is for man by the earthly experiences through which He has passed. Thus by His Incarnation, Death, and Resurrection He is at once the source and goal, the spring and ideal of the new life.

'Yea, thro' life, death, sorrow, and through sinning,
He shall suffice me for He hath sufficed;
Christ is the end, for Christ was the beginning;
Christ the beginning, for the end is Christ.'[3]

Theology may seek to analyse the personality of Christ into its elements—the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Jesus. But after all it is one and indivisible. It is the whole fact of Christ, and not any particular experience taken in its isolation, which is the power of God unto salvation. The question still remains after all our analysis, What was it that gave to these events in the history of Jesus their creative and transforming power? And the answer can only be—Because Christ was what He was. It was the unique character of the Being of whom these were but the manifestations which wrought the spell. What bound the New Testament Christians to the cross was that their Master hung there. They saw in that life lived among

[1] 2 Cor. v. 14 f.; Rom. vi.; Ephes. iii. 16, 17, v. 8.
[2] Gal. ii. 20. [3] Meyers, *Saint Paul.*

men, and in that sacrifice upon Calvary, the perfect consummation of the ideal manhood that lived within their own hearts, and of the love, new upon the earth, which made it possible. The cross stood for the symbol of a truth that pierced to the inner core of their souls. 'He bore our sins.' And thus down the centuries, in their hour of shame, and grief, and death, men have lifted their eyes to the Man of Sorrows, and have found in His life and sacrifice, apart from all theories of atonement, their peace and triumph. It is this note of absolute surrender towards God and of perfect love for man which, because it answers to a deep yearning of the human heart, has given to the mystery of the Incarnation and the Cross its lifting and renewing power.

II

The Human Response

Possession of power involves the obligation to use it. The force is given; it has to be appropriated. The spirit of Christ is not offered in order to free a man from the duties of the moral life. Man is not simply the recipient of divine energy. He has to make it his own and to work it out by his self-determinative activity. Nevertheless the relation of the divine spirit to the human personality is a subject of great perplexity, involving the psychological problem of the connection of the divine and the human in life generally. If in the last resort God is the ultimate source of all life, the absolute Being, who

> 'Can rejoice in naught
> Save only in Himself and what Himself hath wrought';

that truth must be held in harmony with the facts of divine immanence and human experience. The divine spirit holds within His grasp all reality, and by His self-communicating activity makes the world of nature and of life possible. But that being granted, how are we to conceive the relation of that Spirit to man with his distinct individuality, with

his sense of working out a future and a fate in which the Absolute may indeed be fulfilling its purpose, but which are none the less man's own achievement? That is the crux of the problem. The outstanding fact which bears upon this problem is the general character of our experience, the growth of which is not the mere laying of additional material upon a passive subject by an external power, but is a true development, a process in which the subject is himself operative in the unfolding of his own potentialities. Without dwelling further upon this question it may be well to bear in mind two points: (1) The growth of experience is a gradual entrance into conscious possession of what we implicitly are and potentially have from the beginning. Duty, for example, is not something alien from a man, something superimposed by a power not himself. It lies implicit in his nature as his ideal and vocation. The moral life is the life in which a man comes to 'know himself,' to apprehend himself as he truly is. (2) In this development of experience we ourselves are active and self-organising. We are really making ourselves, and are conscious, that even while we are the instruments of a higher power, we are working out our own individuality, exercising our own freedom and determination.[1] The teaching of the New Testament is in full accord with this position. If, on the one hand, St. Paul states that every moral impulse is due to the inspiration of God, no less emphatic is he in ascribing to man himself full freedom of action. 'The ethical sense of responsibility,' says Johannes Weiss,[2] 'the energy for struggle, and the discipline of the will were not paralysed nor absorbed in Paul's case by his consciousness of redemption and his profound spiritual experiences.' Scripture lends no support to the idea which some forms of Augustinian theology assume, that the divine spirit is an irresistible force acting from without upon man and superseding his exertions. It acts as an immanent moral power, not compelling or crushing the will, but quickening and inspiring its efforts.

[1] See Blewett, *The Christian View of the World*, pp. 88 ff., where this subject is suggestively treated.

[2] *Christ and Paul.*

If we inquire what constitutes the subjective or human element in the making of the new life, we find that the New Testament emphasises three main factors—Repentance, Faith, and Obedience. These are complementary, and together constitute what is commonly called 'conversion.'

1. *Repentance* is a turning away in sorrow and contrition from a life of sin, a breaking off from evil because a better standard has been accepted. Our Lord began His ministry with a call to repentance. The first four beatitudes set forth its elements; while the parable of the prodigal illustrates its nature.

Ethical writers distinguish between a negative and a positive aspect of repentance. On its negative side it is regarded as the emotion of sorrow excited by reflection upon sin. But sorrow, though accompanying repentance, must not be identified with it. Mere regret, either in the form of bitterness over one's folly, or chagrin on account of discovery, may be but a weak sentiment which exerts little or no influence upon a man's subsequent conduct. Even remorse following the commission of wickedness may only deepen into a paralysing despair which works death rather than repentance unto life.

(1) On its positive side repentance implies action as well as feeling, and involves a determination of will to quit the past and start on a new life. A man repents not merely when he grieves over his misdeed, but when he confesses it and seeks to make what amendment he can. This positive outlook upon the future, rather than the passive brooding over the past, is happily expressed in the New Testament term μετάνοια, change of mind, and is enforced in the Baptist's counsel, 'Bring forth fruits meet for repentance.'[1] The change of mind here indicated is practically equivalent to what is variously called in the New Testament 'Conversion,'[2] 'Renewal,'[3] 'Regeneration,'[4]—words suggestive of the completeness of the change.

(2) The variety of terms employed to describe conversion

[1] Matt. iii. 8; Luke iii. 8.
[2] Acts xxvi. 20.
[3] Rom. xii. 12; Titus iii. 5.
[4] 2 Cor. v. 17; Gal. vi. 15.

would seem to imply that the Scriptures recognise a diversity of mode. All do not enter the kingdom of God by the same way; and the New Testament offers examples varying from the sudden conversion of a Saul to the almost imperceptible transformation of a Nathaniel and a Timothy. In modern life something of the same variety of Christian experience is manifest. While what is called 'sudden conversion' cannot reasonably be denied,[1] as little can those cases be ignored in which the truth seems to pervade the mind gradually and almost unconsciously—cases of steady spiritual growth from childhood upwards, in which the believer is unaware of any break in the continuity of his inner history, his days appearing to be 'bound each to each by natural piety.'

(3) The question arises, Which is the normal experience? The matter has been put somewhat bluntly by the late Professor James,[2] as to whether the 'twice-born' or the 'once-born' present the natural type of Christian experience. Is it true, he asks, that the experience of St. Paul, which has so long dominated Christian teaching, is really the higher or even the healthier mode of approaching religion? Does not the example of Jesus offer a simpler and more natural ideal? The moral experience of the Son of Man was not a revolution but an evolution. His own religion was not that of the twice-born, and all that He asked of His disciples was the childlike mind.[3] Paul, the man of cities, feels a kindred turbulence within himself. Jesus, the interpreter of nature, feels the steady persuasiveness of the sunshine of God, and grows from childhood in stature, wisdom, and favour with God and man. It is contended by some that the whole Pauline conception of sin is a nightmare, and rests upon ideas of God and man which are unworthy and untrue. 'As a matter of fact,' says Sir Oliver Lodge, 'the higher man of to-day is not worrying about his sins at all, still less about their punishment; his mission, if he is good for anything, is to be up and doing.'[4]

[1] See Begbie, *Broken Earthenware.*

[2] *Varieties of Relig. Experience.*

Mark x. 15.

[4] *Man and the Universe*, p. 220.

This amounts to a claim for the superiority of the first of the two types of religious consciousness, the type which James describes as 'sky-blue souls whose affinities are with flowers and birds and all enchanting innocencies than with dark human passions; . . . in whom religious gladness, being in possession from the outset, needs no deliverance from any antecedent burden.' [1] The second type is marked by a consciousness, similar to St. Paul's, of the divided self. It starts from radical pessimism. It only attains to religious peace through great tribulation. It is the religion of the 'sick soul' as contrasted with that of 'healthy-mindedness.' But, morbid as it may appear, to be disturbed by past sin, it is really the 'twice-born' who have sounded the depths of the human heart, and have been the greatest religious leaders. And so far from the sense of the need of repentance being the sign of a diseased mind, the decreasing consciousness of sin in our day may only prove the shallowness of the modern mind. What men need of religion is power. And there is a danger of people to-day losing a sense of the dynamic force of the older Gospel.[2]

But whether Paul's case is abnormal or the reverse, it is surely a false inference that, because Christ grew up without the need of conversion, His life affords in this respect a pattern to sinful men. It is just His perfect union with God which differentiates Him entirely from ordinary men; and that which may be necessary for sinful creatures is unthinkable in His case. What He was we are to become. But before we can follow Him, there is for us, because of sin, a preliminary step—a breaking with our evil past. And in all His teaching our Lord clearly recognises this. His first call is a call to repentance. It is indeed the childlike mind He requires; but He significantly says that 'except *ye turn* and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter the kingdom of heaven.' [3]

The decision of will demanded of Jesus, while it may not

[1] *Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 80.
[2] Cf. *Foundations: a Statement of Religious Belief by seven Oxford men*, Essay VI., pp. 274 f.
[3] Matt. xviii. 3.

necessarily involve a catastrophe of life or convulsion of nature, must be none the less a deliberate and decisive turning from evil to good. By what road a man must travel before he enters the kingdom, through what convulsion of spirit he must pass, so frequently dwelt upon by St. Paul and illustrated by his own life, Christ does not say. In the Fourth Gospel there is one reported saying describing a process of spiritual agony, like that of physical child-birth, indicative that the change must be radical, and that at some point of experience the great decision must be made, a decision which is likely to involve deep travail of soul.

There are many ways in which a man may become a Christian. Some men have to undergo, like Paul, fierce inward conflict. Others glide quietly, almost imperceptibly, into richer and ampler regions of life. But when or how the transition is made, whether the renewal be sudden or gradual, it is the same victory in all cases that must be won, the victory of the spirit over the flesh, the 'putting off of the old man' and the 'putting on of the new.' Life cannot be always a compromise. Sooner or later it must become an alternative. He who has seen the higher self can be no longer content with the lower. The acts of contrition, confession, and decision—essential and successive steps in repentance—are the immediate effects of the vision of Christ. Though repentance is indeed a human activity, here, as always, the earlier impulse comes from the divine side. He who truly repents is already in the grip of Christ. 'We love Him because He first loved us.'

2. *Faith.*—If repentance looks back and forsakes the old, faith looks forward and accepts the new. Even in repentance there is already an element of faith, for a man cannot turn away from his evil past without having some sense of contrast between the actual and the possible, some vision of the better life which he feels to be desirable.

(1) While there is no more characteristic word in the New Testament than faith, there is none which is used in a greater variety of senses, or whose import it is more difficult to determine. It must not be forgotten at the outset

that though it is usually regarded as a theological term, it is a purely human act, and represents an element in ordinary life without which the world could not hold together for a single day. We constantly live by faith, and in our common intercourse with our fellows we daily exercise this function. We have an irresistible conviction that we live in a rational world in which effect answers to cause. Faith, it has been said, is the capital of all reasoning. Break down this principle, and logic itself would be bankrupt. Those who have denied the intelligibility of the universe have not been able to dispense with the very organ by which their argument is conducted. Hence faith in its religious sense is of the same kind as faith in common life. It is distinguishable only by its *special object* and its *moral intensity*.

(2) The habitual relationship between Christ and His disciples was one of mutual confidence. While Jesus evidently trusts them, they regard Him as their Master on whose word they wholly rely. Ever invested with a deep mystery and awe, He is always for His disciples the embodiment of all that is highest and holiest, the supreme object of reverence, the ultimate source of authority. Peter but expresses the mind of the company when he says, 'To whom can we go but unto Thee, Thou hast the words of eternal life.' Nor was it only the disciples who manifested this personal trust. Many others, the Syrophenician woman, the Roman Centurion, Zacchæus, Bartimæus, also evinced it. It was, indeed, to this element in the human heart that Jesus invariably appealed; and while He was quick to detect its presence, He was equally sensitive to its absence. Even among the twelve, when, in the face of some new emergency, there was evidence of mistrust, He exclaimed, 'O ye of little faith.' And when, beyond His own immediate circle, He met with suspicion and unbelief, it caused Him surprise and pain.[1]

From these and other incidents it is obvious that faith for Jesus had a variety of meanings and degrees.

[1] Matt. xiii. 58; Mark vi. 5.

(*a*) Sometimes it meant simply *trust in divine providence*; as when He bids His disciples take no thought for their lives, because He who feeds the ravens and clothes the lilies cares for them. (*b*) It meant again *belief in His own divine power*; as when He assures the recipients of His healing virtue that their faith hath made them whole. (*c*) It is regarded by Jesus as *a condition of forgiveness and salvation*. Thus to the woman who had sinned He said, 'Thy faith hath saved thee,' and to the man who was sick of the palsy, 'Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.' [1]

The essential and vital mark in all Christ's references is the personal appropriation of the good which He Himself had brought to man. In His various modes of activity —in His discourses, His works of healing and forgiveness— it is not too much to say that Jesus regarded Himself as the embodiment of God's message to the world; and to welcome His word with confidence and joy, and unhesitatingly act upon it, was faith. Hence it did not mean merely the mental acceptance of some abstract truth, but, before all else, personal and intimate devotion to Himself. It seems the more necessary to emphasise this point since Harnack has affirmed 'that, while Christ was the special object of faith for Paul and the other apostles, He did not enter as an element into His own preaching, and did not solicit faith towards Himself.' [2] It is indeed true that Jesus frequently associated Himself with His Father, whose immediate representative He claims to be. But no one can doubt that He also asserts authority and power on His own account, and solicits faith on His own behalf. Nor does He take pains, even when challenged, to explain that He was but the agent of another. On the contrary, as we have seen, He acts in His own right, and pronounces the blessings of healing and forgiveness in His own name. Even when the word 'Faith' is not mentioned the whole attitude and spirit of Jesus impels us to the same conclusion. There was an air of independence and authority

[1] Cf. Stalker, *The Ethic of Jesus*, p. 179.
[2] *Das Wesen des Christenthums*, p. 91, quoted by Stalker, *idem*, p. 176.

about Him which filled His disciples and others, not merely with confidence, but with wonder and awe. His repeated word is, 'I say unto you.' And there is a class of sayings which clearly indicate the supreme significance which He attached to His own personality as an object of faith. Foremost among these is the great invitation, 'Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.'

(3) If we turn to the epistles, and especially to the Pauline, we are struck by the apparently changed meaning of faith. It has become more complex and technical. It is no longer simply the receptive relation of the soul towards Christ; it is also a justifying principle. Faith not only unites the believer to Christ, it also translates him into a new sphere and creates for him a new environment. The past is cancelled. All things have become new. The man of faith has passed out of the dominion of law into the kingdom of Grace.

The Pauline doctrine of Justification by Faith has received in the history of the Church a twofold interpretation. On the one hand, it has been maintained that the sole significance of faith is that it gives to the believer power, by God's supernatural aid, to realise a goodness of which he is naturally incapable. On the other hand, it is held that the peculiarity of faith is that, though he himself is a sinner deserving condemnation, it affords to the believer an assurance of the favour with which a loving Father regards him, not on account of his own attainments, but in virtue of the perfect obedience of the Son of God with whom each is united by faith. The former is the more distinctively Roman view; the latter that of the Reformed Church. While the Catholic form of the doctrine gives to 'works' a place not less important than faith in justification, the Protestant exalts 'faith' to the position of priority as more in harmony with the mystery of the atoning sacrifice of Christ as expounded by St. Paul. Faith justifies, because it is for the Christian the vision of an ideal. What we admire in another is already implicitly within us. We

already possess the righteousness we believe in. The moral beauty of Christ is ours inasmuch as we are linked to Him by faith, and have accepted as our true self all that He is and has achieved. Hence faith is not merely the sight of the ideal in Christ. It is the energy of the soul as well, by which the believer strives to realise that which he admires. According to the teaching of Scripture faith has thus a threefold value. It is a receptive attitude, a justifying principle, and an energising power. It is that by which the believer accepts and appropriates the gift of Life offered by God in Christ.

3. *Obedience.*—Faith contains the power of a new obedience. But faith worketh by love. The soul's surrender to Christ is the crowning phase of man's response. The obedience of love is the natural sequel of repentance and faith, the completing act of consecration. As God gives Himself in Christ to man, so man yields in Christ to God all he is and all he has.

Without enlarging upon the nature of this final act of self-surrender, three points of ethical value ought not to be overlooked.

(1) Obedience is an *activity* of the soul by which the believer appropriates the life of God. Life is not merely a gift, it is a task, an achievement. We are not simply passive recipients of the Good, but free and determinative agents who react upon what is given, taking it up into our life and working it into the texture of our character. The obedience of love is the practical side of faith. While God imparts the energy of the Spirit, we apply it and by strenuous endeavour and unceasing effort mould our souls and make our world.

(2) It is a consecration of the *whole personality.* All the powers of man are engaged in soul-making. Religion is not a detached region of experience, a province separate from the incidents and occupations of ordinary existence. Obedience must cover the whole of life, and demands the exercise and devotion of every gift. Not only is every thought to be brought into subjection to the mind of

Christ, but every passion and desire, every activity and power of body and mind are to be consecrated to God and transformed into instruments of service. 'Our wills are ours to make them thine.' But the will is not a separate faculty; it is the whole man. And the obedience of the will is nothing less than the response of our entire manhood to the will of God.

(3) Finally, obedience is a *growing power of assimilation* to Christ. We grow in the Christian life according to the measure of our faith and the exercise of our love. The spiritual world is potentially ours at the beginning of the Christian life, but it has to be worked out in daily experience. Like every other form of existence spiritual life is a growth which only attains to strength and fruition through continual conflict and achievement. The soul is not a finished product. In patience it is to be acquired.[1] By trial and temptation, by toil and expenditure, through all the hardships and hazards of daily life its value is determined and its destiny shaped. And according to the measure in which we use these experiences, and transmute them by obedience to the will of God into means of good, do we grow in Christian character and approximate to the full stature of the perfect Man.

To this self-determining activity Eucken has given the name of 'Activism.' 'The basis of a true life,' says this writer, 'must be continually won anew.'[2] Activism acquires ethical character inasmuch as it involves the taking up of the spiritual world into our own volition and being. Only by this ceaseless endeavour do we advance to fresh attainments of the moral life, and are enabled to assimilate the divine as revealed to us in Christ. Nor is it merely the individual self that is thus enriched and developed by obedience to the will of God. By personal fidelity to the highest we are aiding the moral development of mankind, and are furthering the advancement of all that is good and true in the world. Not only are we making

[1] Luke xxi. 19.
[2] *Life's Basis and Life's Ideal*, p. 255.

our own character, but we are helping to build up the kingdom of God upon the earth.

Repentance, Faith, and Obedience are thus the human factors of the new life. They are the moral counterparts of Grace. God gives and man appropriates. By repentance we turn from sin and self to the true home of our soul in the Fatherhood of God. By faith we behold in Christ the vision of the ideal self. By obedience and the daily surrender of ourselves to the divine will we transform the vision into the reality. They are all manifestations of love, the responsive notes of the human heart to the appeal of divine love.

SECTION D

CONDUCT

CHAPTER XI

VIRTUES AND VIRTUE

So far we have gained some conception of the Christian ideal as the highest moral good, and have learned also how the Christian character is brought into being. We now enter upon a new section—the last stage of our inquiry—and have to consider the 'new man'—his virtues, duties, and relationships.

The business lying immediately before us in this chapter is to consider the accepted standards in which the Christian good is exhibited—the virtues recognised by the Christian consciousness.

What, then, are the particular forms or manifestations of character which result from the Christian interpretation of life? When we think of man as living in relation to his fellows, and engaging in the common activities of the world, what are the special traits of character which distinguish the Christian? These questions suggest one of the most important, and at the same time one of the most difficult, tasks of Christian Ethics—the classification of the virtues. The difficulty arises in the first instance from the ambiguity attaching to the term 'virtue.' It is often loosely used to signify a meritorious act—as in the phrase, 'making a virtue of a necessity.' It is frequently employed generally for a moral quality or excellency of character, and in this respect is contrasted with vice. Finally, virtues are sometimes identified with duties. Thus we speak of the virtue of veracity. But obviously we may also refer to the duty of veracity. The word ἀρετή signifies 'force,' and was originally used as a property of bodies, plants, or animals.

At first it had no ethical import. In Attic usage it came to signify aptness or fitness of manhood for public life. And this signification has shaped the future meaning of its Latin equivalent—*virtus* (from *vis*, strength, and not from *vir*, a man).

Plato gave to the term a certain ethical value in connection with his moral view of the social life, so that Ethics came to be designated the doctrine of virtues. In general, however, both by the Greek and Roman moralists, and particularly the Stoics, the word *virtus* retained something of the sense of force or capacity—a quality prized in the citizen. The English word is a direct transcript of the Latin. The German noun, *Tugend* (from *taugen*, to fit) means capability, and is related to worth, honour, manliness. The word ἀρετή does not frequently occur in the New Testament.[1] In the few passages in which it appears it is associated with praiseworthiness. In one passage [2] it has a more distinctly ethical signification—'add to your faith virtue'—where the idea is that of practical worth or manhood.

Virtue may be defined as the acquired power or capacity for moral action. From the Christian point of view virtue is the complement, or rather the outcome, of grace. Hence virtues are graces. In the Christian sense a man is not virtuous when he has first appropriated by faith the new principle of life. He has within him, indeed, the promise and potency of all forms of goodness, but not until he has consciously brought his personal impulses and faculties into the service of Christ can he be called truly virtuous. Hence the Christian character is only progressively realised. On the divine side virtue is a gift. On the human side it is an activity. Our Lord's figure of the vine and the branches represents the relation in which Christian character stands to Christ. In like manner St. Paul regards the manifestations of the Christian life as the fruit of the Spirit—the inevitable and natural outgrowth of the divine seed of life implanted in the heart. Hence arises the importance of

[1] Phil. iv. 8; 1 Peter ii. 9. [2] 2 Peter i. 5.

cultivating the inner life of the spirit which is the root of all moral excellency. On the other hand it must be remembered that Christian morality is not of a different sort from natural morality, and the Christian virtues are not merely supernatural qualities added on, but simply human virtues coloured and transfigured by grace and raised to a higher value. The power to act morally, the capacity to bring all our faculties into the service of the spiritual life, is the ground of Christian virtue just as it is of every natural excellence. From this it follows that the distinction sometimes made between natural goodness and Christian goodness is unsound. A virtue is not a superlative act of merit, implying an excess of excellence beyond the requirements of duty. From the Christian standpoint there are no works of supererogation, and there is no room in the Christian life for excess or margin. As every duty is a bounden duty, so every possible excellence is demanded of the Christian. Virtues prescribe duties; ideals become laws; and the measure is, 'Be ye perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect.' The Stoic maxim, 'Nothing in excess,' is inadequate in reference to moral excellence, and Aristotle's doctrine of the 'Mean' can hardly be applied without considerable distortion of facts. The only virtue which with truth can be described as a form of moderation is Temperance. It has been objected that by his doctrine of the 'Mean' Aristotle 'obliterates the awful and absolute difference between right and wrong.' If we substitute, as Kant suggested, 'law' for 'mean,' some of the ambiguity is obviated. Still, after all extenuation is made it may be questioned whether any term implying quantity is a fit expression for a moral attribute.[1]

At the same time the virtues must not be regarded as mere abstractions. Moral qualities cannot be isolated from the circumstances in which they are exercised. Virtue is character in touch with life, and it is only in contact with actual events that its quality can be determined. Actions are not simply good or bad in themselves. They must

[1] Cf. Sir Alex. Grant, *Aristotle's Ethics*.

always be valued both by their inner motives and intended ends. Courage or veracity, for example, may be exercised from different causes and for the most various ends, and occasionally even for those of an immoral nature.[1]

For these and similar reasons some modern ethical writers have regarded the classification of the virtues as unsatisfactory, involving arbitrary and illogical distinctions in value; and some have even discarded the use of the word 'virtue' altogether, and substituted the word 'character' as the subject of ethical study. But inasmuch as character must manifest itself in certain forms, and approximate at least to certain norms or ideals of conduct, it may not be altogether superfluous to consider in their relation and unity those moral qualities (whether we call them virtues, graces, or norms of excellence) which the Christian aims at reproducing in his life.

We shall consider therefore, first, the natural elements of virtue as they have been disclosed to us by classical teachers. Next, we shall compare these with the Christian conception of life, showing how Christianity has given to them a new meaning and value. And finally, we shall endeavour to reveal the unifying principle of the virtues by showing that when transformed by the Christian spirit they are the expressions or implicates of a single spiritual disposition or totality of character.

I

The Natural Basis of the Virtues.—At a certain stage of reflection there arises an effort not merely to designate, but to co-ordinate the virtues. For it is soon discovered that all the various aspects of the good have a unity, and that the idea of virtue as one and conscious is equivalent to the idea of the good-will or of purity of heart. Thus it was seen by the followers of Socrates that the virtues are but different expressions of one principle, and that the ultimate good of character can only be realised by the actual pursuit

[1] Cf. Wundt, *Ethik*, p. 147.

of it in the recognised virtues. We do not sufficiently reflect, says Green, how great was the service which Greek philosophy rendered to mankind. From Plato and Aristotle comes the connected scheme of virtues and duties within which the educated conscience of Christendom still moves when it is impartially reflecting on what ought to be done.[1] Religious teachers may have extended the scope of our obligations, and strengthened the motives which actuate men in the performance of duty, but 'the articulated scheme of what the virtues and duties are, in their difference and their unity, remains for us now in its main outlines what the Greek philosophers left it.'[2]

Among ancient moralists four virtues, Wisdom, Courage, Temperance, Justice were constantly grouped. They were already traditional in Plato's time, but he adopts them as fundamental. Aristotle retained Plato's list, but developed from it some minor excellences.

Virtue, according to Plato, was the health or harmony of the soul; hence the principle of classification was determined by the fitness of the soul for its proper task, which was conceived as the attainment of the good or the morally beautiful. As man has three functions or aspects, a cognitive, active, and appetitive, so there are three corresponding virtues. His function of knowing determines the primal virtue of Wisdom; his active power constitutes the virtue of Courage; while his appetitive nature calls for the virtue of Temperance or Self-control. These three virtues have reference to the individual's personal life. But inasmuch as a man is a part of a social organism, and has relations to others beyond himself, justice was conceived by Plato as the social virtue, the virtue which regulated and harmonised all the others. For the Stoics these four virtues embraced the whole life according to nature. It may be noticed that Plato and Aristotle did not profess to have created the virtues. Wisdom, fortitude, temperance, and justice were, as they believed, radical principles of the moral nature; and all they professed to do was to

[1] Green, *Proleg. to Ethics*, § 249. [2] *Idem.*

awaken men to the consciousness of their natural capacities. If a man was to attain to fitness of life, then these were the fundamental and essential lines on which his rational life must develop. In every conceivable world these are the basal elements of goodness. Related as they are to fundamental functions of personality, they cannot be less or more. They stand for the irreducible principles of conduct, to omit any one of which is to present a maimed or only partial character. In every rational conception of life they must remain the essential and desirable objects of pursuit. It was not wonderful, therefore, when we remember the influence of Greek thought upon early Christianity, that the four classical virtues should pass over into Christian Ethics. But the Church, recognising that these virtues had reference to man's life in relation to himself and his fellow-men in this world alone, added to these the three Pauline Graces, Faith, Hope, and Charity, as expressive of the divine element in man, his relation to God and the spiritual world. The first four were called natural, the last three supernatural: or the 'Cardinal' (*cardo*, a hinge) and the 'Theological' virtues. They make in all seven, the mystic perfect number, and over against these, to complete the symmetry of life, were placed the seven deadly sins.

II

Their Christian Transformation.—But now if we compare the cardinal virtues with the conception of goodness revealed in Scripture, we are at once conscious of a contrast. We seem to move in a new atmosphere, and to be confronted with a view of life in which entirely different values hold.

1. While in the New Testament many virtues are commended, no complete description occurs in any single passage. The beatitudes may be regarded as our Lord's catalogue of the typical qualities of life, and a development of virtuous life might be worked out from the Sermon on the Mount. Beginning with poverty of spirit,

humility, and meekness, and rising up out of the individual struggle of the inner man, we attain to mercifulness and peaceableness—the spirit which bears the poverty of others, and seeks to make others meek and gentle. Next the desire for righteousness finds expression in a readiness to endure persecution, to support the burden of duty in the midst of worldly conflict; and finally in the highest stage the light of virtue shines through the clouds of struggle and breaks forth spontaneously, irradiating all who come into contact with it, and constituting man the servant of humanity, the light of the world.[1] Or we might turn to the apostle Paul, who regards the virtues as the fruit of the Spirit, describing them in general as 'love, joy, peace, long-suffering, goodness, faith, gentleness, humility.'[2] A rich cluster is also mentioned as 'the fruit of light'—goodness, righteousness, truth. A further enumeration is given in Colossians where the apostle commends compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, long-suffering, forbearance, and forgiveness.[3] And once more there is the often-quoted series in the Epistle to the Philippians, 'Whatsoever things are true, reverent, just, chaste, lovely, and kindly spoken of.'[4] Nor must we forget the characteristics of love presented in the apostle's 'Hymn of Charity.'[5] To these descriptions of St. Paul there ought to be added the remarkable passage in which St. Peter unfolds the process of the moral life from its seed to the perfect flower.[6] Though the authorship of this passage has been disputed, that fact does not make the representation less trustworthy and typical as an exhibition of early Christian morality. According to this picture, just as in St. Paul's view, the whole moral life has its root in faith, and character is nothing else than the working out of the initial energy of the soul into virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity—all that makes life worthy and excellent. Character is not built like a house, by the addition of stone to stone. It is evolved as

[1] Matt. v. 1-16. [2] Gal. v. 22-3. [3] Col. iii. 12, 13.
[4] Phil. iv. 8. [5] 1 Cor. xiii. [6] 2 Peter i. 5.

a plant from a seed. Given faith, there will ultimately emerge all the successive qualities of true goodness—knowledge, temperance, patience—the personal virtues, rising upwards to godliness or the love of God, and widening out to brotherhood, and thence to charity or a love of mankind—a charity which embraces the whole world, even those who are not Christian: the enemy, the outcast, and the alien.

These descriptions are not formal or systematic, but are characterised by a remarkable similarity in spirit and tone. They all reflect the mind of Christ, and put the emphasis where Jesus Himself invariably laid it—on love. But the point to which we desire to draw attention is the contrast between the classical and the Christian type of virtue. The difference is commonly expressed by saying that the pagan virtues were of a bold masculine order, whereas the Christian excellences are of an amiable and passive nature.

Yet if we carefully examine the lists as given in Scripture, we shall see that this is hardly a just distinction. Certainly Christianity brings to the front some virtues of a gentle type which are apparently wanting in the Platonic catalogue. But, on the other hand, the pagan virtues are not excluded from the New Testament. They have an acknowledged place in Christian morality. Fortitude and temperance, not to speak of wisdom and justice, are recognised as essential qualities of the Christian character. Christianity did not come into the world as the negative of all that was previously noble in human nature; on the contrary, it took over everything that was good and true, and gave to it a legitimate place. Whatsoever things, says the apostle, are true and just and fair, if there be any virtue or praise in them, think of these things.

Courage is not disparaged by Christianity. In writing to Timothy Paul gives to this virtue its original significance. He only raises it to a higher level, and gives to it a nobler end—the determination not to be ashamed of bearing testimony, and the readiness to suffer hardship for the Gospel's sake. And though the apostle does not expressly

commend courage in its active form in any other passage, we may gather from the whole tenor of his life that bravery, fortitude, endurance, occupied a high place in his esteem. While he made no parade of his sufferings his life was a continual warfare for the Gospel. The courage of a man is none the less real because it is evinced not on the battle-field, but in the conflict of righteousness. He who devotes himself unnoticed and unrewarded, at the risk of his life and at the sacrifice of every pleasure, to the service of the sick and the debased, possesses courage the same in principle as that of the 'brave man' described by Aristotle. Life is a battle, and there are other objects for which a man must contend than those peculiar to a military calling. In all circumstances of his existence the Christian must quit himself as a man, and without courage no one can fulfil in any tolerable degree the duties of his station.

In like manner temperance or self-control is a truly Christian virtue, and it finds repeated mention in Scripture. When, however, we compare the conception of temperance as formulated by Aristotle with the demand of self-denial which the enlightened Christian conscience makes upon itself we are struck with a difference both in the motive and the scope of the principle. Temperance as Aristotle conceived it was a virtue exhibited only in dealing with the animal passions. And the reason why this indulgence ought to be checked was that the lusts of the flesh unfitted a man for his discharge of the civic duties. But, in view of the Greek idea that evil resides in the physical constitution of man, the logical deduction would be the total suppression of the animal passions altogether. But from the Christian standpoint the physical instincts are not an evil to be crushed, but rather a legitimate element in man which is to be disciplined and brought into the service of the spiritual life. Temperance covers the whole range of moral activity. It means the practical mastery of self, and includes the proper control and employment of hand and eye, tongue and temper, tastes and affections, so that they may become effective instruments of righteousness. The practice of

asceticism for its own sake, or abstinence dictated merely by fear of some painful result of indulgence, we do not now regard as a virtue. The true form of self-denial we deem to be only rendered when we forbid ourselves the enjoyment of certain legitimate inclinations for the sake of some higher interest. Thus the scope of the virtue of temperance has been greatly enlarged, and we present to ourselves objects of moral loyalty, for the sake of which we are ready to abandon our desires in a far greater variety of forms than ever occurred to the Greek. An indulgence, for example, which a man might legitimately allow himself, he forgoes in consideration of the claims of his family, or fellow-workmen, or for the good of mankind at large, in a way that the ancient world could not understand. Christian temperance, while the same in principle with the ancient virtue, penetrates life more deeply, and is fraught with a richer and more positive content than was contemplated by the Greek demand.

And the same may be said of the virtues of Wisdom and Justice. Wisdom is a New Testament grace, but mere calculating prudence or worldly self-regard finds no place in the Christian scheme of life. We are enjoined, indeed, to be wise as serpents and harmless as doves in our relations with men; but what we are urged to cultivate is a mind for the right interpretation of the things of God, that spiritual insight which discerns the things of the Spirit; and, while recognising life as a divinely given trust, seeks to obtain a wise understanding of our duties toward God and man.

While the other virtues are to a certain extent self-regarding, Justice is eminently social. At the very lowest it means 'equal consideration' for all, treating, as Kant would say, every man as an 'end,' and not as a means. Morally no man may disregard the claims of others. It is said, indeed, that we must be 'just before we are generous.' But a full and perfect conception of Justice involves generosity. There is no such thing as bare justice. Righteousness, which is the New Testament equivalent, demands more than negative goodness, and in Christian Ethics

passes over into Charity, which finds and fulfils itself in others. Love here and always is the fulfilling of the law, and mercy, benevolence, kindness are the implicates of true justice.

2. It is thus evident that the cardinal virtues are essential elements of Christian character. Christianity, in taking over the moral conceptions of the ancient world, gave to them a new value and range by directing them to new objects and enthusing them with new motives. It has been truly said that the religion of Jesus so profoundly modified the character of the moral ideals of the past that they became largely new creations. The old moral currency was still kept in circulation, but it was gradually minted anew.[1] Fortitude is still the cool and steady behaviour of a man in the presence of danger; but its range is widened by the inclusion of perils of the soul as well as the body. Temperance is still the control of the physical passions; but it is also the right placing of new affections, and the consecration of our impulses to nobler ends. Justice is still the suppression of conflict with the rights of others; but the source of it lies in giving to God the love which is His due, and finding in the objects of His thought the subjects also of our care. Wisdom is still the practical sense which chooses the proper course of action; but it is no longer a selfish calculation of advantage, but the wisdom of men who are seeking for themselves and others not merely temporal good, but a kingdom which is not of this world.

The real reason, then, why Christianity seems by contrast to accentuate the gentler graces is not simply as a protest against the spirit of militarism and the worship of physical power, so prevalent in the ancient world—not merely that they were neglected—but because they and they alone, rightly considered, are of the very essence of that perfection of character which God has revealed to man in Christ. What Christianity has done is not to give pre-eminence to one class over another, but *to make human character complete.* Ancient civilisation was one-sided in its moral

[1] Strong, *Christian Ethics.*

development. The pagan conceptions of virtue were merely materialistic, temporal, and self-regarding. Christ showed that without the spirit of love even such excellences as courage, temperance, and justice did not attain to their true meaning or yield their full implication. Paul, as we have seen, did not disparage heroism, but he thought that it was exhibited as much, if not more, in patience and forgiveness as in self-assertion and retaliation. What Christianity really revealed was a new type of manliness, a fresh application of temperance, a fuller development of justice. It showed the might of meekness, the power of gentleness, the heroism of sacrifice.

3. It is thus misleading to say that Christian Ethics differs from ancient morality in the prominence it gives to what have been called 'the passive virtues.' Poverty of spirit, humility, meekness, mercifulness, and peaceableness are indeed the marks of Christ's teaching. But as Christ conceived them they were not passive qualities, but intensely active energies of the soul. It has been well remarked that[1] there was a poverty of spirit in the creed of the cynic centuries before Christianity. There was a meekness in the doctrine of the Stoic long before the advent of Jesus. But these tenets were very far from being anticipations of Christ's morality. Cynic poverty of spirit was but the poor-spiritedness of apathy. Stoic meekness was merely the indifference of oblivion. But the humility and lowliness of heart, the mercifulness and peace-seeking which Christ inculcated were essentially powers of self-restraint, not negative but positive attitudes to life. The motive was not apathy but love. These qualities were based not on the idea that life was so poor and undesirable that it was not worthy of consideration, but upon the conviction that it was so grand and noble, something so far beyond either pleasure or pain, as to demand the devotion of the entire self—the mastery and consecration of all a man's powers in the fulfilment and service of its divine end.

Hence what Christianity did was not so much to institute

[1] Mathieson, *Landmarks of Christian Morality.*

one type of character for another as to exhibit for the first time the complete conception of what human life should be—a new creature, in whom, as in its great Exemplar, strength and tenderness, courage and meekness, justice and mercy were alike combined. For, as St. Paul said, in Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female, but all are as one. And in this character, as the same apostle finely shows, faith, hope, and charity have the primary place, not as special virtues which have been added on, but as the spiritual disposition which penetrates the entire personality and qualifies its every thought and act.

III

The Unification of the Virtues.—While it is desirable, then, to exhibit the virtues in detail, it is even more important to trace back the virtues to virtue itself. A man's duties are diverse, as diverse as the various occasions and circumstances of life, and they can only come into being with the various institutions of his time, Church and State, home and country, commerce and culture. But the performance of these may be slowly building up in him a consistent personality. It is in character that the unity of the moral life is most clearly expressed. There must be therefore a unity of character underlying the multiplicity of characteristics, one single and commanding principle at work in the formation of life of which every possible virtue is the expression.

1. A unity of this kind is supplied by man's relation to God. Religion cannot be separated from conduct. If it were true, as Epicurus said, that the gods take no concern in human affairs, then not religion only, but morality itself would be in danger. As men's conceptions of God are purified and deepened, they tend to exhibit the varied contents of morality in their connection with a diviner order. It is, then, the thought of man's relation to God which gives coherence to the moral life, and brings all its diverse manifestations into unity.

If we examine the Christian consciousness as presented in the New Testament, we find three words of frequent occurrence repeatedly grouped together, which may be regarded as the essential marks of Christian character in relation to God—Faith, Hope, and Love.

So characteristic are these of the new life that they have been called the theological virtues, because, as Thomas Aquinas says, 'They have God for their object: they bring us into true relation to God, and they are imparted to us by God alone.' [1]

2. These graces, however, cannot be separated. A man does not exercise at one time faith, and at another time hope or love. They are all of a piece. They are but different manifestations of one virtue. Of these love is the greatest, because it is that without which faith and hope could not exist. Love is of the very essence of the Christian life. It is its secret and sign. No other term is so expressive of the spirit of Christ. It is the first and last word of apostolic Christianity. Love may be called the discovery of the Gospel. It was practically unknown in the ancient world. ἔρως, the sensuous instinct and φιλία, the bond of friendship, did exist, but ἀγάπη in its spiritual sense is the creation of Christ. In Christian Ethics love is primal and central. Here we have got down to the bedrock of virtue. It is not simply one virtue among many. It is the quality in which all the virtues have their setting and unity. From a Christian point of view every excellence of character springs directly from love and is the manifestation of it. It is, as St. Paul says, 'the bond of perfectness.' The several virtues of the Christian life are but facets of this one gem.[2]

Love, according to the apostle, is indispensable to character. Without it Faith is an empty profession; Know-

[1] *Summa*, I. ii.

[2] An interesting parallel might be drawn between the Pauline conception of Love as the supreme passion of the soul and lord of the emotions, and the Platonic view of Justice as the intimate spirit of order alike in the individual and the state, expressing itself in, and harmoniously binding together, the virtues of Temperance, Courage, and Wisdom.

ledge, a mere parade of learning; Courage, a boastful confidence; Self-denial, a useless asceticism. Love is the fruitful source of all else that is beautiful and noble in life. It not only embraces but produces all the other graces. It creates fortitude; it begets wisdom; it prompts self-restraint and temperance; it tempers justice. It manifests itself in humility, meekness, and forgiveness:

'As every hue is light,
So every grace is love.'

Love is, however, closely associated with faith and hope. Faith, as we have seen, is theologically the formative and appropriating power by which man makes his own the spirit of Christ. But ethically it is a form of love. The Christian character is formed by faith, but it lives and works by love. A believing act is essentially a loving act. It is a giving of personal confidence. It implies an outgoing of the self towards another—which is the very nature of love. Hope, again, is but a particular form of faith which looks forward to the consummation of the good. The man of hope knows in whom he believes, and he anticipates the fulfilment of his longings. Hope is essentially an element of love. Like faith it is a form of idealism. It believes in, and looks forward to, a better world because it knows that love is at the heart of the universe. As faith is the special counteragent against materialism in the present, so hope is the special corrective of pessimism in regard to the future. Love supplies both with vision. Christian hope, because based on faith and prompted by love, is no easy-going complacence which simply accepts the actual as the best of all possible worlds. The Christian is a man of hope because in spite of life's sufferings he never loses faith in the ideal which love has revealed to him. 'Tribulation,' says St. Paul, 'worketh patience, and patience probation, and probation hope.' Hope has its social aspect as well as its personal; like faith it is one of the mighty levers of society. Men of hope are the saviours of the world. In days of persecution and doubt it is their courage which rallies the wavering hosts and gives others

heart for the struggle. Every Christian is an optimist not with the reckless assurance that calls evil good, but with the rational faith, begotten of experience, that good is yet to be the final goal of ill. 'Thy kingdom come' is the prayer of faith and hope, and the missionary enterprise is rooted in the confidence begotten of love, that He who has given to man His world-wide commission will give also the continual presence and power of His Spirit for its fulfilment.

3. Faith, hope, and charity are at once the root and fruit of all the virtues. They are the attributes of the man whom Christ has redeemed. The Christian has a threefold outlook. He looks upwards, outwards, and inwards. His horizon is bounded by neither space nor time. He embraces all men in his regard, because he believes that every man has infinite worth in God's eyes. The old barriers of country and caste, which separated men in the ancient world, are broken down by faith in God and hope for man which the love of Christ inspires. Faith, hope, and love have been called the theological virtues. But if they are to be called virtues at all, it must be in a sense very different from what the ancients understood by virtue. These apostolic graces are not elements of the natural man, but states which come into being through a changed moral character. They connect man with God, and with a new spiritual order in which his life has come to find its place and purpose. They were impossible for a Greek, and had no place in ancient Ethics. They are related to the new ideal which the Gospel has revealed, and obtain their value as elements of character from the fact that they have their object in the distinctive truth of Christianity—fellowship with God through Christ.

These graces are not outward adornments or optional accomplishments. They are the essential conditions of the Christian man. They constitute his inmost and necessary character. They do not, however, supersede or render superfluous the other virtues. On the contrary they transmute and transfigure them, giving to them at once their coherence and value.

CHAPTER XII

THE REALM OF DUTY

We have now to see how the virtues issue in their corresponding duties and cover the whole field of life.

Virtues and duties cannot be strictly distinguished. As Paulsen remarks, 'They are but different modes of presenting the same subject-matter.' [1] Virtues are permanent traits of character; duties are particular acts which seek to realise virtues.

The word 'duty,' borrowed from Stoic philosophy, inadequately describes, both on the side of its obligation and its joy, the service which the Christian is pledged to offer to Christ. For the Christian the two moments of pleasure and duty are united in the higher synthesis of love.

In this chapter we shall consider, first, some aspects of Christian obligation; and, second, the particular duties which arise therefrom in relation to the self, others, and God.

I

Aspects of Duty

1. *Duty and Vocation.*—'While duty stands for a universal element there is a personal element in moral requirement which may be called vocation.' [2] As soon as the youth enters upon the larger world he has to make choice of a profession or life-work. Different principles may guide him in his selection. First of all, the circumstances

[1] Paulsen, ***Ethics***, bk. III. chap. i. Cf. also Wundt, *Ethik*, p. 148. But see also W. Wallace, *Lectures and Essays*, p. 325, on their confusion.
[2] Mackintosh, *Chr. Ethics*, p. 114.

of life will help to decide the individual's career. Our calling and duties arise immediately out of our station. Already by parental influence and the action of home-environment character is being shaped, and tastes and purposes are created which will largely determine the future. Next to condition and station, individual capacity and disposition ought to be taken into account. No good work can be accomplished in uncongenial employment. A man must have not only fitness for his task, but also a love for it. Proper ambition may also be a determining factor. We have a right to make the most of ourselves, and to strive for that position in which our gifts shall have fullest scope. But the ultimate decision must be made in the light of conscience. Self-interest should not be our sole motive in the choice of a vocation. It is not enough to ask what is most attractive, what line of life will ensure the greatest material gain or worldly honour? Rather should we ask, Where shall I be safest from moral danger, and, above all, in what position of life, open to me, can I do the most good? It is not enough to know that a certain mode of livelihood is permitted by law; I must decide whether it is permitted to me as a Christian. For, after all, underlying, and giving purpose and direction to, our earthly vocation is the deeper calling of God into His kingdom. These cannot, indeed, be separated. We cannot divide our life into two sections, a sacred and a secular. Nor must we restrict the idea of vocation to definite spheres of work. Even those who are precluded by affliction from the activities of the world are still God's servants, and may find in suffering itself their divinely appointed mission. There is a divinity which shapes our ends, and in every life-calling there is something sacred. 'Saints,' says George Eliot, 'choose not their tasks, they choose but to do them well.'

But the decisions of life do not cease with the choice of a calling. At every moment of our career fresh difficulties arise, and new opportunities open up which demand careful thought. Our first obligation is to meet faithfully the claims of our station. But in the complexity of life we are

being constantly brought into wider relations with our fellow-men, which either modify the old, or create entirely new situations. While the rule is to do the duty that lies nearest us, to obey the call of God at each moment, it needs no little wisdom to discern one's immediate duty, and to know what the will of God actually is.

2. *Conflict of Duties.*—In the sphere of duty itself a threefold distinction, having the imprimatur of the Romish Church, has been made by some moralists: (1) the problem of colliding interests; (2) 'counsels of perfection'; and (3) indifferent acts or 'Adiaphora,' actions which, being neither commanded nor forbidden, fall outwith the domain of Christian obligation. It will not be necessary to discuss at length these questions. The Gospel lends no support to such distinctions, and as Schleiermacher points out they ought to have no place in Protestant Ethics.[1]

(1) With regard to the 'conflict of duties,' when the collision is really, as it often is, a struggle between inclination and duty, the question answers itself. There are, of course, cases in which perplexity must occur to an honest man. But the difficulty cannot be decided by drawing up a list of axiomatic precepts to fit all conceivable cases. In the dilemma, for example, between self-preservation and self-sacrifice which may present itself in some tragic experience of life, a host of considerations relative to the individual's history and relationships enter in to modify the situation, and the course to be taken can be *finally* determined by a man's *own* conscience alone. Ultimately there can be no collision of duties as such. Once a man recognises a certain mode of conduct to be right for him there is really no choice. In judgment he may err; passion or desire may obscure the issue; but once he has determined what he ought to do there is no alternative, 'er kann nicht anders.'

(2) Again, it is a complete misapprehension of the nature of duty to distinguish between the irreducible minimum and acts of supererogatory goodness which outrun duty.

[1] Cf. Haering, *Ethics of Chr. Life*, p. 230.

Goodness is one, and admits of no degrees. All duty is absolute. An overplus is unthinkable, since no man can do more than his duty. A Christian can only do what he recognises as his obligation, and this he ought to fulfil at every moment and with all his might. Love, which is the Christian's only law, knows no limit. Even when we have done our utmost we are still unprofitable servants.

(3) Finally, the question as to whether there are any acts which are indifferent, permissible, but neither enjoined nor forbidden, must also be answered in the negative. If the Christian can do no more than his duty, because in every single action he seeks to fulfil the whole will of God, it is clear that there can be no moment of life that can be thought of not determined by the divine will. There is no part of life that is colourless. There must be no dropped stitches in the texture of the Christian character.

It is most frequently in the domain of amusement that the notion of the 'Permissible' is applied. It has been contended that as recreation really lies outwith the Christian sphere, it may be allowed to Christian people as a concession to human weakness.[1] But can this position be vindicated? Relaxation is as much a need of man as work, and must, equally with it, be brought within the scope of Christian conduct. We have no business to engage in any activity, whether involving pleasure or pain, that we cannot justify to our conscience. Are not the joys of life, and even its amusements, among God's gifts designed for the enriching of character? And may not they, too, be consecrated to the glory of God? We are to use the world while not abusing it, for all things are ours if we are Christ's. Over every department of life the law of Christ is sovereign, and the ultimate principle applicable to all problems of duty is, 'Whatsoever ye do in word or deed do all to the glory of God.'

3. *Rights and Duties.*—The foregoing question as to the scope of duty leads naturally to the consideration of the relation of duties and rights. It is usual to distinguish

[1] This seems to be the position of Herrmann; see *Ethik.*

between legal and moral rights; but at bottom they are one. The rights which I legally claim for myself I am morally bound to grant to others. A right is expressed in the form of a permission; a duty, of an imperative. I may or may not demand my legal rights; morally, I must perform my duties. But, on the other hand, a right may be secured by legal compulsion; a duty, as a moral obligation, can never be enforced by external power: it needs our own assent.[1]

Strictly speaking rights and duties are correlative. Every right carries with it an obligation; not merely in the objective sense that when one man has a right other men are under the obligation to respect it, but also in the subjective sense that when a man has a right he is bound to use it for the general good. It is sometimes said, 'A man may do what he likes with his own.' Legally that may be true, but morally he is under obligation to employ it for the general good just as strictly as if it were another's. A man's rights are not merely decorations or ends in themselves. They are opportunities, instruments, trusts. And when any man has them, it means that he is placed on a vantage-ground from which, secure of oppression or interference, he may begin to do his duty.[2] But this moral aspect of right is often lost sight of. People are so enamoured of what they call their rights that they forget that the real value of every right depends upon the use to which they put it. A man's freedom does not consist in having rights, but in fulfilling them. 'After all,' says Mazzini, 'the greatest right a man can possess or recognise—the greatest gift of all—is simply the privilege and obligation to do his duty.'[3] This is the only Christian doctrine of rights. It underlies our Lord's teaching in the parable of the Talents. We only have what we use.

(1) Much has been written of the 'Natural rights of Man.'[4] This was the claim of a school of political philosophy of

[1] Cf. Eucken, *Life's Basis*, p. 185.
[2] Maccunn, *Ethics of Citizenship*, p. 40.
[3] *Duties of Man*, chap. i.
[4] See discussion by late W. Wallace in *Lectures and Essays*, pp. 213 ff.

which Paine was the most rigorous exponent. The contentions of Paine were met as vigorously by the negations of Bentham and Burke. And if it be supposed that the individual is born into the world with certain ready-made possessions, fixed and unalterable, the claim is untenable. Such an artificial account of man ignores entirely the evolution of moral nature, and denies the possibility of development in man's conception of law and duty. 'It is,' as Wundt says, 'to derive all the moral postulates that have been produced in our minds by previous moral development from moral life as it actually exists.' [1]

(2) But while the 'natural rights of man' cannot be theoretically vindicated, they may still be regarded as ends or ideals to be striven after. 'Justifiable or unjustifiable in theory, they may still remain a convenient form in which to couch the ultimatum of determined men.' [2] They give expression, at least, to a conviction which has grown more clear and articulate with the advance of thought—the conviction of the *dignity and worth of the individual.* This thought was the keynote of the Reformation. The Enlightenment, with its appeal to reason, as alike in all men, gave support to the idea of equality. Descartes claimed it as the philosophical basis of man's nature. Rousseau and Montesquieu were among its most valiant champions. Kant made it the point of departure for the enforcement of human right and duty. Fichte but elaborated Kant's view when he contended for 'the equality of everything which bears the human visage.' [3] And Hegel has summed up the conception in what he calls 'the mandate of right'—'Be a person, and respect others as persons.' [4] Poets sometimes see what others miss. And in our country, at least, it is to Wordsworth, Tennyson, and Browning, and still more, perhaps, to Burns, that we are indebted for the insistence upon the native worth of man.

But if this claim has only gradually attained to articulate

[1] *Ethik*, p. 190. [2] Maccunn, *op. cit.*, p. 42.
[3] Cf. Eucken, *Main Currents of Modern Thought*, p. 348.
[4] Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, p. 45.

expression, and is only now being made the basis of social reconstruction, it must not be forgotten that it is essentially a Christian truth. In Harnack's language, 'Jesus Christ was the first to bring the value of every human soul to light, and what He did no one can any more undo.' [1]

When, however, the attempt is made to analyse this ultimate principle of manhood, opinions differ as to its constituents, and a long list of 'rights' claimed by different political thinkers might be made. The famous 'Declaration of Rights' [2] included Life, Liberty, Property, Security, and 'Resistance of Oppression.' To these some have added 'Manhood Suffrage,' 'Free Access to the Soil,' and a common distribution of the benefits of life and means of production. This is a large programme, and certainly no community as yet has recognised all its items without qualification. Obviously they are not all of the same quality, nor are they of independent validity; and at best they but roughly describe certain factors, considered by various agitators as desirable, of an ideal social order.

(3) We are on safer ground, and for Christian Ethics, at least, more in consonance with ultimate Christian values, when we describe the primary realities of human nature in terms of the revelation of life as given by the Person and teaching of Jesus Christ. The three great verities upon which He constantly insisted were, man's value for himself, his value for his fellow-men, and his value for God. These correspond generally to the three great ethical ideas of life—Personality, Freedom, and Divine Kinship. But although the sense of independence, liberty and divine fellowship is the first aspect of a being who has come to the consciousness of himself, it is incomplete in itself. Man plants himself upon his individuality in order that he may set out from thence to take possession, by means of knowledge, action, and service, of his larger world. Man's rights are but

[1] *Das Wesen des Christenthums*; cf. also *Ecce Homo*, p. 345.

[2] Adopted in Massachusetts in 1773.—'All men have equal rights to life, liberty, and property.'

possibilities which must be transmuted by him into achievements.

> 'This is the honour,—that no thing I know,
> Feel, or conceive, but I can make my own
> Somehow, by use of hand or head or heart.'[1]

Rights involve obligations. The right of personality carries with it the duty of treating life, one's own and that of others, as sacred. The right of freedom implies the use of one's liberty for the good of the society of which each is a member. And finally, the sense of divine kinship involves the obligation of making the most of one's life, of realising through and for God all that God intends in the gift of life.

In these three values lies the Christian doctrine of man.[2] Because of their fullness of implication they open out to our vision the goal of humanity—the principle and purpose of the whole process of human evolution—the perfection of man. Given these three Christian truths—the Sacredness of Personality, the Brotherhood of Man, and the Fathernood of God—and all that is essential in the claim of the 'Natural Rights of Man' is implicitly contained. The one thing needful is that men become alive to their privileges and go forward to 'possess their possessions.'

II

Spheres of Duty

We are thus led to a division, natural if not wholly logical, of duties which spring from these rights—duties towards self, others, and God. Though, indeed, self-love implies love of others, and all duty is duty to God, still it may be permissible to frame a scheme of duties according as one or other element is prominent in each case.

1. *Duties in Relation to Self.*—It is obvious that without (1) *respect* for self there can be no respect for others. I am

[1] Browning, *Prince Hohenstiel-Schwangau.*
[2] Cf. Wheeler Robinson, *The Christian Doctrine of Man*, pp. 281 f.

a part of the moral whole, and an element in the kingdom of God. I cannot make myself of no account. Our Lord's commandment, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,' makes a rightly conceived self-love the measure of love to one's neighbour. Self-respect involves (2) *self-preservation*, the care of health, the culture of body and mind. Not only is it our duty to see that the efficiency and fitness of the bodily organism is fully maintained, but we must also guard it against everything that would defile and disfigure it, or render it an instrument of sin. Christianity requires the strictest personal purity, purity of thought and feeling as well as of deed. It demands, therefore, constant vigilance, self-control, temperance, and even self-denial, so that the body may be, not, as the ancients thought, the prison-house of the soul, but the temple of the Holy Spirit. Christianity is, however, opposed to asceticism. Though Jesus denied Himself to the uttermost in obedience to the voice of God, there is in His presentation of life a complete absence of those austerities which in the history of the Church have been so often regarded as marks of superior sanctity.[1] It is unnecessary here to dwell upon athletics and sport which now so largely occupy the attention of the youth of our land. Physical exercise is necessary to the maintenance of bodily fitness, yet it may easily become an all-absorbing pursuit, and instead of being merely a means to an end, may usurp the place in life which belongs to higher things.

(3) Self-maintenance involves also the duty of *self-development*, and that not merely of our physical, but also of our mental life. If the body has its place and function in the growth of Christian character, still more has the mind its ethical importance. Our Maker can have no delight in ignorance. He desires that we should present not a fragmentary but complete manhood. Specialisation, though a necessity of the age, is fraught with peril to the individual. The exigencies of labour require men to concentrate their energies on their own immediate tasks; but each must seek to be not merely a craftsman, but a man. Other sides

[1] Matt. xi. 18; Luke vii. 33.

of our nature require to be cultivated besides those which bring us into contact with the ways and means of existence. Indeed, it is only by the possession of a well-trained mind that the fullest capacity, even for special pursuits, can be obtained. It has become a commonplace to say that every man should have equality of opportunity to earn a livelihood. But equality of opportunity for education, as something which ought to be within the reach of every youth in the land, is not so frequently insisted upon. Beyond the claims of daily occupation every one should have a chance, and, indeed, an inducement, to cultivate his mental and spiritual nature. Hence what is called 'culture,' the all-round development of the human faculties, is an essential condition of moral excellence. For, as Goethe has said, the object of education ought to be rather the formation of tastes than simply the communication of knowledge. But most important of all the self-regarding aims of life is the obligation of *Self-discipline*, and the use of every means of moral culture which the world supplies. It is through the complex conditions of earthly existence that the character of the individual is developed. It will only be possible to indicate briefly some of the aids to the culture of the moral life. Among these may be mentioned: (*a*) *The Providential Experiences of life.* The world itself, as a sphere of Work, Temptation, and Suffering, is a school of character. The affections and cares of the home, the duties and tasks incident to one's calling, the claims of one's fellow-men, the trials and temptations of one's lot—these are the universal and common elements in man's moral education. Not to escape from the world's activities and conflicts, but to turn them into conditions of self-mastery, is the duty of each. Men do work, but work makes men. The shopkeeper is not merely selling wares; the artisan or mechanic is not simply engaged in his handicraft; the mason and builder are not only erecting a house; each is, in and through his toil, making his own soul. And so, too, suffering and temptation are the tools which God commits to His creatures for the shaping of their own lives. Saints

and sinners are made out of the same material. By what Bosanquet has finely called 'the miracle of will' the raw stuff of life is taken up and woven into the texture of the soul. (*b*) The so-called *secular opportunities of culture.* Innumerable sources of self-enrichment are available. Everything may be made a vehicle of moral education. Knowledge generally, and especially the ministry of nature, the influence of art, and the study of literature, are potent factors in the discipline and development of Christian character. To these must be added (*c*) *The special religious aids and means of grace.* From an ethical point of view the Church is a school of character. It 'guards and keeps alive the characteristic Christian ideas, and thereby exhibits and promotes the Christian ideal of life.'[1] Its fellowship, worship, and ordinances; its opportunities of brotherly service and missionary activity, as well as the more private spiritual exercises of prayer and meditation—all are means of discipline and gifts committed to the stewardship of individuals in order that they may realise the greatness of life's possibilities, and attain through union with God to the fullness of their stature in Christ.

But while the truth that the soul has an inalienable worth is repeatedly affirmed, the New Testament touches but lightly upon the duties of self-regard. To be occupied constantly with the thought of one's self is a symptom of morbid egoism rather than of healthy personality. The avidity of self-improvement and even zeal for religion may become a refined form of selfishness. We must be willing at times to renounce our personal comfort, to restrain our zest for intellectual and æsthetic enjoyment, to be content to be less cultured and scholarly, less complete as men, and ready to part with something of our own immediate good that others may be ministered to. Hence the chief reason probably why the Scriptures do not enlarge upon the duties of self-culture is, that according to the spirit of the Gospel the true realisation of self is achieved through self-sacrifice. Only as a man loses his life does he find it. To horde one's

[1] Ottley, *Ideas and Ideals.*

possessions is to waste them. Growth is the condition of life. But in all growth there is reciprocity of expenditure and assimilation, of giving and receiving. Self-realisation is only gained through self-surrender. Not, therefore, by anxiously standing guard over one's soul, but by dedicating it freely to the good of others does one achieve one's true self.

2. *Duties in Relation to Others.*—We belong to others, and others belong to us. They and we are alike parts of a larger whole.

(1) While this is recognised in Scripture, and all men are declared to be brothers in virtue of their common humanity, Christianity traces the brotherhood of man to a deeper source. The relation of the individual to Christ is the true ground of love to others. In Christ all distinctions which in other respects separate men are dissolved. Beneath the meanest garb and coarsest features, in spite even of the defacement of sin, we may detect the vast possibilities of the soul for whom Christ has died. The law of love is presented by Jesus as the highest of all the commandments, and the duty to others is summed up generally in what is known as the golden rule. Of the chief manifestations of brotherly love mention must be made (*a*) of the comprehensive duty of *Justice.* The ground upon which justice rests is the principle that each individual is an end in himself. Hence it is the duty of each to respect the rights of his neighbours, negatively refraining from injury and positively rendering that which our fellow-men have a right to claim. Religion makes a man more sensitive to the claims of humanity. Mutual respect requires a constant effort on the part of all to secure for each the fullest freedom to be himself. Christianity interprets justice to mean emancipation from every condition which crushes or degrades a man. It seeks to create a social conscience, and to arouse in each a sense of responsibility for the good of all. At the same time social justice must not be identified with charity. Charity has done much to relieve distress, and it will always form an indispensable element in

the Christian's duty towards his less fortunate brethren; but something more radical than almsgiving is required if the conditions of life are to be appreciably bettered. Justice is a demand not for bread alone; it is a claim of humanity to life, and all that life ought to mean. Christianity affirms the spirit of human brotherhood—a brotherhood in which every child will have a chance to grow to a noble manhood, and every man and woman will have opportunity and encouragement to live a free, wholesome, and useful life. That is the Christian ideal, and to help towards its realisation is the duty laid upon every citizen of the commonwealth. The problems of poverty, housing, unemployment, intemperance, and all questions of fair wages, legitimate profits, and just prices, fall under the regulative principle of social justice. The law is, 'Render to all their dues.' The love which worketh no ill to his neighbour will also withhold no good.[1]

(*b*) *Truthfulness.*—Justice is not confined to acts, but extends to speech and even to thought. We owe to others veracity. Even when the motive is good, there can be no greater social disservice than to fail in truthfulness. Falsehood, either in the form of hypocrisy or equivocation, and even of unsound workmanship, is not only unjust to others; it is unjust to ourselves, and a wrong to the deeper self—the new man in Christ.[2]

Is deception under all circumstances morally wrong? Moralists have been divided on this question. The instance of war is frequently referred to, in which it is contended that ruse and subterfuge are permissible forms of strategy.[3] There are, however, many distressing cases of conscience, in which the duties of affection and veracity seemingly conflict. It must be remembered that no command can be carried out to its extreme, or obeyed literally. Truth is not always conveyed by verbal accuracy. There may be higher interests at stake which might be prejudiced, and indeed unfairly represented by a merely literal statement.

[1] Rom. xiii. 7-10.
[2] Col. iii. 9, 10.
[3] See Lecky, *Map of Life*.

The individual conscience must decide in each case. We are to speak the truth in love. Courage and kindliness are to commingle. But when all is said it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that in the last analysis lack of truth argues a deficient trust in the ultimate veracities of the universe, and rests upon a practical unbelief in the divine providence which can make 'all things work together for good to them that love God.'

(*c*) Connected with truthfulness, and also a form of justice, is the duty enjoined by St. Paul of forming *just judgments* of our fellow-men. If we would avoid petty fault-finding and high-minded contempt, we must dismiss all prejudice and passion. The two qualities requisite for proper judgment are knowledge and sympathy. Goethe has a fine couplet to the effect that 'it is safe in every case to appeal to the man who knows.' [1] But to understanding must be added appreciative consideration. We must endeavour to put ourselves in the position of our brother. Without a finely blended knowledge and sympathy we grow intolerant and impatient. Fairness is the rarest of moral qualities. He who would estimate another truly must have what St. Paul calls 'spiritual discernment'—the 'even-balanced soul' of one 'who saw life steadily and who saw it whole.'

(2) Brotherly Love evinces itself further in *Service*, which takes the three forms of Compassion, Beneficence or practical kindness, and Example.

(*a*) *Compassion* or sympathy is a readiness to enter into the experiences of others. As Christians nothing that concerns our brother can be a matter of indifference to us. As members of the same spiritual community we are participators in each other's joys and sorrows, 'weeping with those that weep, and rejoicing with those that rejoice.' It is no mere natural instinct, but one which grows out of the Christian consciousness of organic union with Christ. 'When one member suffers, all the members suffer with it.' [2]

[1] *Vor dem Wissenden sich stellen, sicher ist's in allen Fällen.*
[2] 1 Cor. xii. 26.

We fulfil the law of Christ by bearing one another's burdens.

(*b*) *Practical Beneficence* is the natural outcome of sympathy. Feelings pass into deeds. Those redeemed by the love of Christ become the agents of His love, gladly dispensing to others what they themselves have received. The ministry of love, whatever shape it may take, must, in the last resort, be a giving of self. No one can do a kindness who does not put something of himself into it. No true service can be done that does not cost us more than money.

In modern society it is inevitable that personality should largely find its expression and exercise in material possessions. Without entering here upon the question of the institution of private property, it is enough to say that the possession of material goods may be morally defended on the twofold ground, that it ensures the security of existence, and is an essential condition of the development of individual and national resources. The process of acquisition is a moralising influence, since it incites the individual to work, and tends to create and foster among men interchange of service. Property, says Hegel, is the embodiment and instrument of the will.[1] But in a civilised community there must be obviously restrictions to the acquisition and use of wealth. Unbridled appropriation and irresponsible abuse are alike a peril to society. The State has therefore the right of interference and control in regard to all possessions. Even on the lowest ground of expediency the very idea of property involves on the part of all the principle of co-operation and reciprocity—the obligation of contributing to the general weal. It would, however, be most undesirable that the government should undertake everything for the general good of man that is now left to spontaneous effort and liberality. But from the standpoint of Christian Ethics possessions of all kinds are subject to the law of stewardship.[2] Every gift is

[1] *Phil. of Right*, pp. 48 ff. ; see also Wundt, *Ethik*, pp. 175 f.
[2] Cf. Ottley, *Idem*, p. 271.

bestowed by God for the purpose of social service. No man can call the things which he possesses—endowments, wealth, power—his own. He is simply a trustee of life itself. No one may be an idler or parasite, and society has a just claim upon the activity of every man. The forms of such service are various; but the Christian spirit will inspire a sense of 'the ultimate unity of all pursuits that contribute to the good of man.' [1]

The ministry of love extends over the whole realm of existence, and varies with every phase of need. Physical necessities are to be met in the spirit of charity. St. Paul pleads repeatedly the cause of the poor, and commends the grace of liberality. Giving is to be cheerful and without stint. But there are needs which material aid cannot meet—desolation, anxiety, grief—to which the loving heart alone can find ways of ministering. And beyond all physical and moral need is the need of the soul; and it lies as a debt upon those who themselves have experienced the grace of Christ to seek the renewal and spiritual enrichment of their brethren.

(*c*) There is one special form of practical kindness towards others which a follower of Christ will often be called upon to exercise—the spirit of *forbearance and forgiveness*. The Christian is to speak evil of no man, but to be gentle, showing all meekness unto all men; living peaceably with all men, avoiding everything provocative of strife; even 'forbearing one another and forgiving one another, if any have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you so also do ye.'

(3) Finally, we may serve others by *Example*, by letting the light of life so shine before men that they seeing our good works shall glorify God our Father. This duty, however, as Fichte points out, 'has often been viewed very incorrectly, as if we could be obliged to do this or that, which otherwise we would not have needed to do, for the sake of a good example.' [2] That which I am commanded

[1] Green, *Prolegg.*, p. 173, quoted by Ottley.
[2] *Science of Ethics* (trans.), p. 337.

to do I must do for its own sake without regard to its effect upon others. Esteem can be neither outwardly compelled nor artistically produced; it manifests itself voluntarily and spontaneously. A modern novelist [1] ironically exposes this form of altruism by putting into the mouth of one of her characters the remark, 'I always make a point of going to church in order to show a good example to the domestics.' At the same time no one can withhold one's influence; and while the supreme motive must be, not to make a display, but to please God, he who is faithful to his station and its duties cannot fail to affect his fellow-men for good. The most effective example is given unconsciously, as the rose exhales its sweetest perfume without effort, or the light sheds its radiance simply by being what it is.

3. *Duties in Relation to God.*—Here morality runs up into religion, and indeed since all duties are in their last analysis duties toward God, Kant and other moralists have objected to the admission into Ethics of a special class of religious obligations. It has been well remarked that the genuine Christian cannot be known by particular professions or practices, but only by the heavenly spirit of his life.[2] Hence religious duty cannot be formulated in a number of precise rules. Love to God finds expression not in mechanical obedience, but in the spontaneous outflow of the heart. The special duties to the Divine Being may be briefly described under the main heads of Recognition, Obedience, and Worship.

(1) *Recognition.*—The acknowledgment of God rests upon knowledge. Without some comprehension of what God is there can be no intelligent allegiance to Him. We cannot, indeed, by logical reasoning demonstrate the existence of the Deity any more than we can demonstrate our own being. But He has not left Himself without a witness, and He speaks to man with many voices. The material creation is the primary word of God. The beauty, and still more the sublimity, of nature are a revelation through

[1] Miss Fowler, *Concerning Isabel Carnaby.*
[2] Drummond, *Via, Veritas, Vita,* p. 227.

matter of something beyond itself, a message of the spiritual, bearing 'authentic tidings of invisible things.' But nature is symbolic. It is a prophecy rather than an immediate revelation. Still it warrants the expectation of a yet fuller manifestation. That fuller utterance we have in man himself. There, spirit reveals itself to spirit; and in the two primary intuitions of man—self-consciousness and the sense of moral obligation—the presence of God is disclosed. But, higher still, the long historic evolution has culminated in a yet clearer manifestation of the Deity. In Christ, the God-Man, the mystery underlying and brooding over the world is unveiled, and to the eye of faith is revealed the Fatherhood of God.

The first duty, therefore, we owe to God is that of recognition, the acknowledgment of His presence in the world. To feel that He is everywhere, sustaining and vitalising all things; to recognise His will in all the affairs of our daily life, is at once the duty and blessedness of man.

(2) *Obedience* follows acknowledgment. It is partly passive and partly active.

(*a*) As *passive*, it takes the form of habitual *trust or acquiescence*, the submissive acceptance of trials which are ultimately, we believe, not really evils, because ordained by God and overruled for good.[1] This spirit of obedience can be maintained by *constant vigilance* alone.[2] While connected with the anticipated coming of the Son of Man, the obligation had a more general application, and may be regarded as the duty of all in the face of the unknown and unexpected in life. We are therefore to watch for any intimation of the divine will, and commit ourselves trustfully to the absolute disposal of Him in whose hands are the issues of our lives.

(*b*) But obedience has also an *active* side. *Faithfulness* is the complement of faith. The believer must exercise fidelity, and go forward with energy and purpose to the tasks committed to him. As stewards of Christ we are

[1] Matt. viii. 25 f., x. 26; Luke viii. 23 f.
[2] Matt. xxv. 1 f.; Mark xxiv. 42; Luke xii. 36 f.

to occupy till He come, employing every talent entrusted to us in His service. Work may be worship, and we can glorify God in our daily tasks. No finer tribute can a man give than simply himself.

(3) *Worship.*—The special duties of worship belong to the religious rather than the ethical side of life, and do not demand here more than a passing reference. The essence of religion lies in the subordination of the finite self to the infinite; and worship is the conscious outgoing of the man in his weakness and imperfection to his Maker, and it attains its fullest exercise in (*a*) *reverence*, humility, and devotion. The feeling of dependence and sense of need, together with the consciousness of utter demerit and inability which man realises as he gazes upon the majesty and grace of God, awaken the (*b*) instinct of *prayer*. 'It is the sublime significance of prayer,' says Wuttke, 'that it brings into prominence man's great and high destiny, that it heightens his consciousness of his true moral nature in relation to God; and as morality depends on our relation to God, prayer is the very life-blood of morality.' [1] The steadfast aspiration of the soul to God, whose will is our law and whose blessing is granted to whatsoever is done in His name, is the habitual temper of the Christian life. But prayer must also be particular, definite, and expectant. By a law of our nature, and apart from all supernatural intervention, prayer exercises a reflex influence of a very beneficial character upon the mind of the worshippers. But he who offers his petitions expecting nothing more will not even attain this. 'If prayers,' says Mr. Lecky, 'were offered up solely with a view to this benefit, they would be absolutely sterile and would speedily cease.' [2] The purely subjective view of prayer as consisting solely in 'beneficent self-suggestion' empties the term of significance. Even Frederick Meyers, who lays so much stress upon the importance of self-suggestion in other aspects of experience, admits that prayer is something more than a subjective

[1] *Chr. Ethics* (trans.), vol. ii. p. 221.
[2] *Hist. of Europ. Morals*, vol. i. p. 36.

phenomenon. 'It is not only a calling up of one's own private resources; it must derive its ultimate efficacy from the increased flow from the infinite life into the life of the suppliant.' [1]

(c) Prayer attains its highest expression in *Thanksgiving and Joy*. Gratitude is the responsive feeling which wells up in the heart of those who have experienced the goodness of God, and recognise Him as the great Benefactor. Christians are to abound in thankfulness. We live in a world where everything speaks to us of divine love. Praise is the complement of prayer. The grateful heart sees life transfigured. It discovers everywhere tokens of grace and hope,

> 'Making the springs of time and sense
> Sweet with eternal good.'

Peace, trust, joy, hope are the ultimate notes of the Christian life. 'Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks.' Thanksgiving, says St. Bernard, 'is the return of the heart to God in perpetual benediction.'

In the kingdom of love duty is swallowed up in joy. Life is nothing but the growing realisation of God. With God man's life begins, and to Him turns back at last in the wrapt contemplation of His perfect being. In fellowship with God man finds in the end both himself and his brother.

> 'What is left for us, save, in growth
> Of soul, to rise up, far past both,
> From the gift looking to the Giver,
> From the cistern to the river,
> And from the finite to the Infinity
> And from man's dust to God's divinity?' [2]

'God,' says Green, 'is a Being with whom we are in principle one, in the sense that He is all which the human spirit is capable of becoming.' [3] In the worship of God,

[1] *Human Personality*, vol. ii. p. 313.
[2] Browning, *Christmas Eve*.
[3] *Proleg.*, p. 198.

man dies to the temporal interests and narrow ends of the exclusive self, and lives in an ever-expanding life in the life of others, manifesting more and more that spiritual principle which is the life of God, who lives and loves in all things.[1]

[1] Cf. Jones, *Browning as Philosophical and Religious Teacher*, p. 367.

CHAPTER XIII

SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS

In last chapter we dealt with the rights and duties of the individual as they are conditioned by his relation to himself, others, and to God. In this chapter it remains to speak more particularly of the organised institutions of society in which the moral life is manifested, and by means of which character is moulded. These are the Family, the State, and the Church. These three types of society, though distinguishable, are closely allied. At first, indeed, they were identical. Human society had its origin, most probably, in a primitive condition in which domestic, political, and religious ends were one. Even in modern life Family, State, and Church do not stand for separate interests. So far from their aims colliding they are mutually helpful. An individual may be a member of all three at one time. From a Christian point of view each is a divine institution invested with a sacred worth and a holy function, and ordained of God for the advancement of His kingdom.

I

The Family is the fountain-head of all the other social groups, 'the cell of the social organism.' Man enters the world not as an isolated being, but by descent and generation. In the family each is cradled and nurtured, and by the domestic environment character is developed. The family has a profound value for the nation. Citizenship rests on the sanctity of the home. When the fire on the hearth is quenched, the vigour of a people dies.

1. Investigations of great interest and value have been pursued in recent years regarding the origin and evolution of the family. However far back the natural history of the race is carried, it seems scarcely possible to resist the conclusion that some form of family relationship is coeval with human life. Widely as social arrangements differ in detail among savage peoples, arbitrary promiscuity can nowhere be detected. Certain laws of domestication have been invariably found to exist, based upon definite social and moral restrictions universally acknowledged and rigidly enforced. Two primitive conditions are present wherever man is found—the tribe and the family. If the family is never present without the tribe, the tribe is never discovered without 'those intra-tribal distinctions and sexual regulations which lie at the bottom of the institution of the family.'[1] Westermarck indeed says that 'the evidence we possess tends to show that among our earliest human ancestors the family and not the tribe formed the nucleus of every social group, and in many cases was itself perhaps the only social group. The tie that kept together husband and wife, parents and children, was, if not the only, at least the principal factor in the earliest forms of man's social life.'[2] If the family had been an artificial convention called into being by human will and ingenuity, it might conceivably be destroyed by the same factors. But whatever arguments may be adduced for the abolition of marriage and family life to-day, the appeal to primitive history is not one of them. On the contrary the earliest forms of society show that the family is no invention, that it has existed as long as man himself, and that all social evolution has been a struggle for the preservation of its most valuable features.[3]

2. If, even in early times, and especially among the Hebrews, Greeks, and Romans, the family was an important factor in national development, it has been infinitely more so

[1] Lofthouse, *Ethics of the Family*, p. 77.
[2] *Hist. of Human Marriage*, p. 538.
[3] The literature on this subject is enormous. See specially works of Westermarck, M'Lennan, Frazer, Hobhouse, Andrew Lang, and Ihering.

since the advent of Christianity. Christ did not create this relationship. He found it in existence when He came to the earth. But He invested it with a new ethical value. He laid upon it His consecrating touch, and made it the vehicle of all that is most tender and true in human affection, so that among Christian people to-day no word is fraught with such hallowed associations as the word 'home.' This He did both by example and teaching. As a member of a human family Himself, He participated in its experiences and duties. He spent His early years in the home of Nazareth, and was subject unto His parents. He manifested His glory at a marriage feast. By the grave of Lazarus He mingled His tears with those of the sorrowing sisters of Bethany. He had a tender regard for little children, and when mothers brought their infants to Him He welcomed them with gracious encouragement, and, taking the little ones in His arms, blessed them, thus consecrating for all time both childhood and motherhood. Throughout His life there are indications of His deep reverence and affection for her who was His mother, and with His latest breath he confided her to the care of His beloved disciple.

There are passages indeed which seem to indicate a depreciation of family relationships.[1] The most important of these are the sayings which deal with the home connections of those whom He called to special discipleship.[2] Not only are father and mother to be loved less than He, but even in comparison with Himself are to be hated.[3] Among the sacrifices His servants must be ready to make is the surrender of the home.[4] But these references ought to be taken in conjunction with, and read in the light of, His more general attitude to the claims of kindred. It was not His indifference to, but His profound regard for, home ties that drew from Him these words. He knew that affection may narrow as well as widen the heart, and that our tender-

[1] See chap. vii. in Garvie's *Studies in Inner Life of Jesus.*
[2] Matt. viii. 21, 22; Luke ix. 59-62.
[3] Luke xiv. 26; Matt. x. 37.
[4] Mark x. 29, 30.

est intimacies may bring our most dangerous temptations. There are moments in the history of the heart when the lesser claim must yield to the greater. For the Son of Man Himself, there were interests higher even than those of the family. Some men, perhaps even most, are able to fulfil their vocation without a surrender of the joys of kinship. But others are called to a wider sphere and a harder task. For the sake of the larger brotherhood of man, Jesus found it necessary to renounce the intimacies of home. What it cost Him to do so we, who cannot fathom the depth of His love, know not. Even such an abandonment did He demand of His first disciples. And for the follower of Christ still there must be the same willingness to make the complete sacrifice of everything, even of home and kindred, if they stand in the way of devotion to the kingdom of God.[1]

(1) Our Lord's direct statements regarding the nature of the family leave us in no doubt as to the high place it holds in His conception of life. Marriage, upon which the family rests, is, according to Jesus, the divinely ordained life-union of a man and woman. In His quotation from Genesis He makes reference to that mysterious attraction, deeply founded in the very nature of man, by which members of the opposite sex are drawn to each other. But while acknowledging the sensuous element in marriage, He lifts it up into the spiritual realm and transmutes it into a symbol of soul-communion. Our Lord does not derive the sanction of wedded life from Mosaic legislation. Still less does He permit it as a concession to human frailty. It has its ground in creation itself, and while therefore it is the most natural of earthly relationships it is of God's making. To the true ideal of marriage there are several features which our Lord regards as indispensable. (*a*) It must be *monogamous*, the fusion of two distinct personalities. 'They two shall be one flesh.' Mutual self-impartation demands that the union should be an exclusive one. (*b*) It is a *union of equality*. Neither person-

[1] Matt. xix. 12.

ality is to be suppressed. The wedded are partners who share one another's inmost thoughts and most cherished purposes. But this claim of equality does not exclude but rather include the different functions which, by reason of sex and constitution, each is enabled to exercise. 'Woman is not undeveloped man but diverse.' And it is in diversity that true unity consists. Both will best realise their personality in seeking the perfection of one another. (*c*) It is a *permanent* union, indissoluble till the parting of death. The only exception which Christ acknowledges is that form of infidelity which *ipso facto* has already ruptured the sacred bond.[1] According to Jesus marriage is clearly intended by God to involve sacred and permanent obligations, a covenant with God, as well as with one another, which dare not be set aside at the dictate of a whim or passion. The positive principle underlying this declaration against divorce is the spirit of universal love that forbids that the wife should be treated, as was the case among the dissolute of our Lord's time, as a chattel or slave. Nothing could be more abhorrent to Christian sentiment than the modern doctrine of 'leasehold marriage' advocated by some.[2] It has been ingeniously suggested that the record of marital unrest and divorce in America, shameful as it is, may not be in many cases altogether an evil. The very demand to annul a union in which reverence and affection have been forfeited may spring from a growing desire to realise the true ideal of marriage.[3] (*d*) Finally, it is a *spiritual* union. It is something more than a legal contract, or even an ecclesiastical ordinance. The State must indeed safeguard the civil rights of the parties to the compact, and the Church's ceremony ought to be sought as the expression of divine blessing and approval. But of themselves these do not constitute the inner tie which makes the twain one, and binds them together amid all the chances and changes of this earthly life.[4] In the teaching of both Christ and

[1] Matt. v. 32, xix. 3-10; Mark x. 11, 12.
[2] See Forsyth, *Marriage: its Ethics and Religion.*
[3] King, *Ethics of Jesus*, p. 69.
[4] Stalker, *Ethic of Jesus*, p. 336.

the apostles marriage is presented as a high vocation, ordained by God for the enrichment of character, and invested with a holy symbolism. According to St. Paul it is the emblem of the mystic union of Christ and His Church, and is overshadowed by the presence of God, who is the archetype of those sacred ideas which we associate with the name of fatherhood.

(2) Though marriage is the most personal of all forms of social intercourse, there are many varied and intricate interests involved which require *legal recognition* and adjustment. Questions as to the legitimacy of offspring, the inheritance of property, the status and rights of the contracting parties, come within the domain of law. The State punishes bigamy, and forbids marriage within certain degrees of consanguinity. Many contend that the State should go further, and prevent all unions which endanger the physical vigour and efficiency of the coming generation. It is undoubtedly true that the government has a right to protect its people against actions which tend to the deterioration of the race. To permit those to marry who are suffering from certain maladies of mind or body is to commit a grave crime against society. But care must be taken lest we unduly interfere with the deeper spiritual sympathies and affections upon which a true union is founded. In agitating for State control in the mating of the physically fit, the champions of eugenics are apt to exaggerate the materialistic side of marriage, and overlook those qualities of heart and mind which are not less important for the well-being of the race. In the discipline of humanity weakness and suffering are assets which the world could ill afford to lose.[1]

(3) In modern times the institution of marriage is menaced by two opposite forces; on the one hand, by a revolutionary type of socialism, and on the other, by the reactionary influence of self-interested individualism. (*a*) It is contended by some advanced socialists that among

[1] Though Nietzsche does not use the word he may be regarded as the father of modern eugenics.

the poor and the toiling home life is practically non-existent; indeed, under present industrial conditions, impossible. Marriage and separate family life are insuperable barriers, it is said, to corporate unity and social progress. It is but fair to add that this extreme view is now largely repudiated by the most enlightened advocates of a new social order, who are contending, they tell us, not for the abolition, but for the betterment, of domestic conditions.[1] (*b*) The stability of social life is being threatened even more seriously by a self-centred individualism. Marriage is considered as a merely temporary arrangement which may be terminated at will. It is contended that divorce should be granted on the easiest terms, and the most trifling reasons are seriously put forward as legitimate grounds for the annulling of the holiest of vows. Without discussing these disintegrating influences, it is enough to say that the trend of history is against any radical tampering with the institution of marriage, and any attempt to disparage the sanctity of the home or belittle domestic obligations would be to poison at its springs the moral life of man.

3. The duties of the various members of the family are explicitly, if briefly, stated in the apostolic epistles. They are valid for all times and conditions. Though they may be easily elaborated they cannot well be improved. All home obligations are to be fulfilled *in* and *unto* the Lord. The fear of God is to inspire the nurture of children, and to sanctify the lowliest services of the household. Authority is to be blended with affection. (1) *Parents* are not to provoke their children by harsh and despotic rule, nor yet to spoil them by soft indulgence. *Children* are to render obedience, and, when able, to contribute to the support of their parents.[2] Masters are to treat their servants with equity and respect. Servants are exhorted to show fidelity. In short all the relationships of the household are to be hallowed by the spirit of Christian love.

Many questions relative to the family arise, over which

[1] Cf. Ramsay Macdonald, *Socialism*.

[2] Mark vii. 9-13.

we may not linger. One might speak of the effect of industrial conditions upon domestic life, the employment of women and children in factories, the evil of sweating, the problem of our city slums, and, generally, of the need of improved environment in order that our labouring classes may have a chance of a healthier and purer home existence. Legislation can do much. But even law is ineffective to achieve the highest ends if it is not backed by the public conscience. The final solution of the problem of the family rests not in conditions but in character, not in environment but in education, in the kind of men we are rearing.

(2) This century has been called the *woman's* century. And certainly there is an obvious trend to-day towards acknowledgment, in all departments of life, of women's equality with men. There is, however, a difference of opinion as to what that equality should mean; and there seems to be a danger in some quarters of overlooking the essential difference of the sexes. No people can achieve what it ought while its wives and mothers are degraded or denied their rights. For her own sake, as well as for the weal of the race, whatever is needful to enable woman to attain to her noblest womanhood must be unhesitatingly granted.[1]

(3) But this is even more the *children's* era. A new sense of reverence for the child is one of the most promising notes of our age, and the problems arising out of the care and education of the young have created the new sciences of pedagogy and child-psychology. Regard for child-life owes its inspiration directly to the teaching of Christ. The child in the simplicity of its nature and innocence of its dependence is, according to the Master, the perfect pattern of those who seek after God. It is true that in the art of antiquity child-life was frequently represented. But as Burckhardt says it was the drollery and playfulness, even the quarrelsomeness and stealth, and above all the lusty health and animal vigour of young life that was depicted. Ancient art did not behold in the child the prophecy of a new and purer world. Moreover, it was æsthetic

[1] Cf. King, *The Moral and Religious Challenge of our Times*, pp. 42 f.

feeling and not real sympathy with childhood which animated this movement. As time went on the teaching of Christ on this subject was strangely neglected, and the history of the treatment of the young is a tragic tale of neglect and suffering. Only now are we recovering the lost message of Jesus in regard to the child, and we are beginning to realise that infancy and youth have their rights, and demand of the world both care and affection. Ours sons and daughters are the nation's assets. Yet it is a parent's question even more than the State's. In a deeper sense than we imagine children are the creation of their parents. It is the effect of soul upon soul, the mother's touch and look, the father's words and ways, that kindle into flame the dull material of humanity, and begin that second birth which should be the anxiety and glory of parenthood. But if the parent makes the child, scarcely less true is it that the child makes the parent. In the give and take of home life a new world is created. When a father really looks into his child's eye he is not as he was before.[1] Indispensable as is the State's education of the young, there is an important part which the community cannot undertake, and there is a danger in curbing individuality by a stereotyped method of instruction. 'All social enactments,' says Harnack, 'have a tendency to circumscribe the activities of the individual. If we unduly fetter the free play of individual effort we break the mainspring of progress and enterprise, and create a state of social immobility which is the antecedent of national decay.'[2] Youth ought to be taught self-reliance and strenuousness of will; and this is a work which can only be done in the home by the firm yet kindly influence of the parents. But there is another aspect of the home problem not less pressing. The want of training in working-class families is largely answerable for the waifs and strays with which our cities team. Even in middle-class households there are indications of a lack not only of discipline, but of

[1] Cf. W. Wallace, *Lects. and Addresses*, p. 114.
[2] *Aus Leben und Wissenschaft.*

that kindly sympathy and affectionate counsel on the part of parents, and of reverence and frankness in the children; with the result that the young people, missing the attachment and interest which the home should supply, seek their satisfaction outside the domestic circle, often with the most disastrous results. The problem of the family is thus the problem of nurturing the very seeds of the moral life. Within the precincts of the nation's homes the future of the commonwealth is being determined.

II

1. The *State* is the supreme controller of social relationships. As distinguished from the family and the Church, it is the realm of organised force working for social ends. Its purpose is to secure the conditions of life essential to order and progress, and it can fulfil its function only as it is endowed with power to enforce its authority. The interference of the State with the liberty of the individual has created a reaction in two opposite quarters towards complete abrogation of all State compulsion. On the one side Tolstoy pleads for the removal of force, because it violates the principle of love and subverts the teaching of Jesus—'Resist not evil.' Militant anarchism as the other extreme demands the abrogation of authority, because it believes that restraint hinders progress and happiness, and that if governmental force were abolished individuals would be best able to take care of themselves. The aim of anarchism is to destroy force by force; the aim of Tolstoy is to allow force to do its worst. Such a spirit of non-resistance would mean the overthrow of all security, and the reversion to wild lawlessness. It is an utter travesty of Christ's teaching. Extremes meet. Violence and servility join hands. Anarchism and Tolstoyism reveal the total bankruptcy of unrestricted individualism.

The social order for which the State stands is not so much an interference with the freedom of the subject as the condition under which alone individual liberty can be preserved.

The view, however, that the State is an artificial relationship into which men voluntarily enter in order to limit their selfish instincts and to secure their mutual advantages—the theory of the 'social contract'—has been discarded in modern times as a fiction of the imagination. It is not of his own choice that the individual becomes a member of society. He is born into it. Man is not a whole in himself. He is only complete in his fellows. As he serves others he serves himself. But men are not the unconscious functions of a mechanical system. They are free, living personalities, united by a sense of human obligation and kindredship. The State is more than a physical organism. It is a community of moral aims and ideals. Even law, which is the soul of the State, is itself the embodiment of a moral principle; and the commonwealth stands for a great ethical idea, to the fulfilment of which all its citizens are called upon to contribute.

2. The reciprocal duties of the State and its citizens receive comparatively little prominence in the New Testament. But they are never treated with disparagement or contempt. During our Lord's earthly life the supreme power belonged to the Roman Empire. Though Jesus had to suffer much at the hands of those in authority, His habitual attitude was one of respect. He lived in obedience to the government of the country, and acknowledged the right of Cæsar to legislate and levy taxes in his own province. While giving all deference to the State officials before whom He was brought, He did not hesitate to remind them of the ideal of truth and justice of which they were the chosen representatives.[1] St. Paul's teaching is in harmony with his Master's, and is indeed an expansion of it.[2] 'The powers that be are ordained of God. Render therefore to all their dues, tribute to whom tribute.' Beyond, however, enjoining the necessity of work as a means of independence, and recommending that each should remain in the sphere in which he has been placed, and perform conscientiously the duties of his calling, we

[1] Matt. xii. 18-22; John xviii. 23, xix. 10 f. [2] Rom. xiii.

find little direct reference in the Epistles to the matter of citizenship. But as has been truly said 'the citizen has but to stand in his station, and perform its duties, in order to fulfil the demands of citizenship.' [1] St. Paul's insistence therefore upon the personal fidelity of every man to the duties of his sphere goes far to recognise that spirit of reciprocal service which is the fundamental idea of the commonwealth.

3. Of the two extreme views as to the meaning of the State between which the verdict of history has wavered—that of Augustine, who regarded the State as the result of man's sinful condition and as the direct antithesis of the kingdom of God; and that of Hegel, who saw in it the highest ethical form of society, the realisation of the moral ideal—the view of St. Paul may be said to have approximated more nearly to the latter. Writing to the Christians at Rome Paul does not suggest that it was merely for prudence' sake that they should give to the Imperial Power unquestioning obedience. He appeals to the loftiest motives. All authority is of God in its origin and ultimate purpose. What does it matter to him whether Nero be a devil or a saint? He is the prince upon the throne. He is the symbol of divine authority, 'the minister of God to thee for good.' As a Christian Paul looks beyond the temporal world-power as actually existing. Whatever particular form it may assume, he sees in the State and its rulers only the expression of God's will. Rome is His agent, oppressive, and, it may be, unjust, but still the channel through which for the moment the Almighty works for the furtherance of His purposes.[2]

The conception of the State as thus formulated involves a twofold obligation—of the State towards its citizens, and of its citizens towards the State.

(1) As the embodiment of public right the State owes protection to its subjects, guarding individual privileges and prohibiting such actions as interfere with the general

[1] Sir H. Jones, *Idealism as a Practical Creed*, p. 123.
[2] Some sentences are here borrowed from author's *Ethics of St. Paul.*

good. Its functions, however, are not confined to restrictive measures. Its duty is not only to protect the rights of the individual, but to create and maintain such conditions of life as are essential to the development of personality. In its own interests it is bound to foster the growth of character, and to promote culture and social well-being. In modern times we look to the State not only to protect life and property, but to secure for each individual and for all classes of men that basis of material well-being on which alone life in its truest sense can be built up. The government must therefore strike some kind of balance between the extremes of individualism and socialism. While the old theory of *laissez-faire*, which would permit every man to follow his own individual bent without regard to the interests of others, has been generally repudiated, there is still a class of politicians who ridicule the 'night watchman' idea of the State as Lassalle calls it. 'Let there be as little State as possible,' exclaims Nietzsche. According to such thinkers the State has only negative functions. The best government is that which governs least, and allows the utmost scope to untrammelled individual enterprise. But if there is a tendency on the part of some to return to the individualistic principle, the 'paternal' idea as espoused by others is being carried to the verge of socialism. The function of the State is stretched almost to breaking point when it is conceived as the 'guardian angel' who accompanies and guards with perpetual oversight the whole life of the individual from the cradle to the grave. Many of the more cautious writers [1] of the day are exposing the dangers which lurk in the bureaucratic system of government. This tendency is apt to crush individual enterprise, and cause men to place entire reliance upon external aid and centralised power. It is indeed difficult to draw a fast line of demarcation between purely individual and social ends. There are obviously primary interests belonging to society as a whole which the State, if it is to be the instrument of the common good, ought to control; certain

[1] *E.g.* Eucken, Kindermann, Mallock, and earlier H. Spencer.

activities which, if permitted as monopolies, become a menace to the community, and which can be satisfactorily conducted only as departments of the State. National life is a unity, and it can only maintain its integrity as it secures for all its constituents, justice, equity before the law, and freedom of each to be himself. The State ought to protect those who in the competitive struggle of the modern industrial system find themselves at a hopeless disadvantage. It is the duty of the commonwealth to secure for each the opportunity to become what he is capable of being, and to fulfil the functions for which he is best fitted. The State cannot make men moral, but it can interfere with existing conditions so as to make the moral life easier for its citizens. Criminal law cannot create saints, but it can punish evil-doers and counteract the forces of lawlessness which threaten the social order. It cannot legislate within the domain of motive, but it can encourage self-restraint and thrift, honesty and temperance. It cannot actually intermeddle with the sanctity of the home, or assume the rôle of paternal authority, but it can insist upon the fulfilment of the conditions of decency and propriety; it can condemn insanitary dwellings, suppress traffic in vice, supervise unhealthy trades, protect the life and health of workmen, and, generally, devise means for the culture and the advancement, intellectually and morally, of the people. The State in some degree embodies the public conscience, and as such it has the prerogative of awakening and stimulating the consciences of individuals. As a divine institution it is one of the channels through which God makes His will known to man. Law has an ethical import, and the State which is founded upon just and beneficent laws moulds the customs and forms the characters of its citizens.

(2) But if the State is to fulfil its ideal function it must rely upon the general co-operation of its citizens. The measure of its success or failure will depend upon the extent to which an enlightened sense of moral obligation prevails in the community. Men must rise above their

own immediate interests and realise their corporate being. Government makes its will dominant through the voice of the people. It cannot legislate beyond the sympathies of its constituents. As the individuals are, so the commonwealth will be. Civil duties vary according to the qualifications and opportunities of individuals. But certain general obligations rest upon all.

(*a*) It is the duty of all to take an *interest in public affairs*. What concerns us collectively is the concern of each. Everything that touches the public good should be made a matter of intelligent and watchful interest by all. (*b*) It is the duty of all to *conform to the laws* of the country. It is possible that a particular enactment may conflict with the dictates of conscience, and it may be necessary to protest against what seems to be an injustice. No rule can be laid down for exceptional cases. Generally it will be best to submit to the wrong, while at the same time using all legitimate means to secure the repeal of the obnoxious law. And if they will revolt, martyrs must not complain nor be unready to submit to the penalties involved. (*c*) It is the further duty of all to take some *personal part* in the government—if not by active service, at least by the conscientious recording of one's vote. Christians must not leave the direction of the nation's affairs to non-Christians. The spirit of Christ forbids moral indifference to anything human. All are not fitted for, or called upon to take, public office; but it is incumbent upon every man to maintain an intelligent public spirit, and to exercise all the duties of good citizenship. It has been truly said that they who give most to the State get most from the State. It is the men who play their part as active citizens working for the nation's cause who enrich their own lives and reap the harvest of a full existence. Not by withdrawal from social service, but in untiring labour for their country's weal, shall men win for themselves and their brethren the fruits of liberty and peace. For nations as for men emancipation may come with a stroke, but freedom can be earned only by strenuous and united toil.

(3) Already these ideals have begun to take shape. The most significant feature of modern times is the growing spirit of democracy. Men of all classes are awakening to their rights, and are accepting their share in the task of social reconstruction. 'We know how the masses,' says Eucken, 'are determined to form a mere dependent body of the so-called higher classes no longer, but to take the problem of life independently into their own hands.' [1] But while the modern democratic movement is not without its hopeful aspects, it is fraught also with grave perils. It is well that the people should awake to their obligations, and realise the meaning of life, especially in its social implications. But there is a danger that culture may not advance with emancipation, and while the masses demand their rights they may not at the same time discern their duties. For rights involve duties, and emancipation, as we have seen, is not liberty. The appeal of the socialistic party is to the equality of all who bear human features. It sounds plausible. But there never has been, nor never can be, such equality. Nature and experience alike reveal a pronounced and insuperable inequality among men. The law of diversity strikes deep down into the very origin and constitution of mankind. The equality proclaimed by the French Revolutionists is now regarded as an idle dream. Not equality of nature but equity before the law, justice for all, the opportunity for every man to realise himself and make the most of the life and the gifts which God has given him—that is the only claim which can be truly made. 'The only idea,' says Eucken, 'which can give to equality any meaning is the conviction that humanity has spiritual relations, that each individual has a value for himself and for the whole because he is a part of a larger spiritual world.' Hence if democracy is truly to come to its own and fulfil its high vocation, the Pauline figure of the reciprocal influence of the body and its members must be proclaimed anew as the ideal of the body politic—a unity fulfilling itself in difference—an organic life in which the unit finds its

[1] *Life's Ideal and Life's Basis.*

place of security and service in the whole, and the whole lives in and acts through the individual parts.

If we are to awaken to the high vocation of the Christian state, to realise the possibilities of our membership one with another, a new feeling of manhood and of national brotherhood, a new pride in the community of life, must take possession of our hearts. We need, as one has said, a baptism of religious feeling in our corporate consciousness, a new sense that we are serving God in serving our fellows, which will hallow and hearten the crusade for health and social happiness, and give to every citizen a sense of spiritual service.

III

Unlike the family and State the *Church* is the creation of Jesus Christ. It is the witness of His Presence in the world. In its ideal form it is world-wide. The Redemption for which it stands is a good for all men. Though in practice many do not acknowledge its blessing, the Church regards no man beyond its pale of grace. It is set in the midst of the world as the symbol and pledge of God's universal love.

1. The *Relation of Church and State* is a difficult question with a long history, and involving much controversy. Whatever view may be held as to their legal connection, their interests can never be regarded as inimical. The Church cannot be indifferent to the action of the State, nor can the State ignore the work of the Church. But since their spheres are not identical nor their aims entirely similar, the trend of modern opinion seems to indicate that, while working in harmony, it is more satisfactory that they should pursue independent paths. There are spiritual ends committed to the Church by its Head over which the civil power has no jurisdiction. On the other hand there are temporal concerns with which ecclesiastical courts have neither the vocation nor the qualifications to deal. Still, the Church, as the organ of Christian thought

and activity, has responsibilities with regard to civil matters. While religion is the chief agent in the regeneration of man, religion itself is dependent upon all social means, and the Church must regard with sympathy every effort made by the community for moral improvement. The main function of the Church in this connection is to keep before its members a high ideal of social life, to create a spirit of fidelity in every sphere of activity, and, particularly, to educate men for the tasks of citizenship. The State, on the other hand, as the instrument of civic life, has obligations towards the Church. Its duty is hardly exhausted by observing an attitude of non-interference. In its own interests it is bound, not merely to protect, but encourage the Church in the fulfilment of its immediate aims. Parliament, however, must concede to ecclesiastical bodies complete liberty to govern themselves. The Church, as the institution of Christ, claims full autonomy; and the State goes beyond its province when it imposes hampering restrictions which interfere with the exercise of its authority and discipline within its own sphere.

2. As a religious institution the Church exists for three main purposes: (1) the *Worship* of God and the Edification of its members; (2) the *Witness* of Christ to Mankind; (3) the *Evangelisation* of the World.

(1) The first of these objects has already been dealt with when treating of the duties to God. It is only needful to add here that the Church is more than a centre of worship; it is the home of kindred souls knit together by a common devotion to Christ. It is the school of character which seeks the mutual edification of its members 'by provoking one another to love and to good works.' Hence among Protestants the duty of *Church Discipline* is acknowledged, which deals with such sins or lapses from rectitude as constitute 'offences' or 'scandals,' and tend to bring into disrepute the Christian name and profession. In the Roman Church, the Confessional, through which moral error is avowed, with its system of penances, has in view the same object—viz., to reprove, correct, and reclaim

those who have lapsed into sin—thus seeking to fulfil Christ's ideal 'to despair of no man.'

(2) But the Church is also a rallying place of service. Both in its corporate capacity, and through the lives of its individual members, the Church seeks to bear constant *witness to the mind of Christ.* It proclaims His living example. It reiterates His will and embodies His judgment, approving of what is good, condemning what is evil, and ever more confronting the world with the high ideal of the divine Life and Word. Not all who bear the name of Christ are consistent witnesses. But still the aim of the Church is to harmonise the profession and practice of its members, and generally to spiritualise secular life by the education of public opinion. Before, however, Christians can hope to make a profound impression upon the outside world, it is not unnatural to expect that they should exhibit a *spirit of concord* among themselves, seeking to heal the unhappy schisms by which the Church is rent. But while our separations are deplorable—and we ought not to cease our endeavour for the reunion of Christendom—we must not forget that there may be harmony of spirit even amid diversity of operation, and that where there is true brotherly sympathy between Christians, there already is essential unity.[1]

(3) The special work of the Church to which it is constrained by the express terms of its Master's commission, is to *preach the Gospel* to every creature and to bring all men into obedience to Christ. A distinction is commonly made between Home and Foreign Missions. While the distinction is useful, it is scarcely valid. The work of the Church at home and abroad is one. The claims of the ignorant and hapless of our own land do not exempt us from responsibilities to the heathen world. The Lord's Prayer for the coming of the Kingdom requires of Christian men that they shall consecrate their gifts along every line of effort to the fulfilment of the divine will upon the earth.

3. While all sections of the Church are convinced that

[1] Eph. iv. 3.

an honest application of the principles of Jesus to the practical affairs of life would speedily transform society, there is considerable diversity of opinion as to the proper attitude of Christianity to *social problems*. The outward reconstruction of social order was not, it must be admitted, the primary aim of Jesus: it was rather the spiritual regeneration of the individual. But such could only become a reality as it transformed the entire fabric of life. (1) Christ's teaching could not but affect the organisation of industry as well as every other section of the social structure. Though Jesus has many warnings as to the perils of riches, there is no depreciation of wealth (in its truest sense). It is true He refuses to interfere in a dispute between two brothers as to worldly property, and repudiates generally the office of arbiter. It is true also that He warns His disciples against covetousness, and lays down the principle that 'a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.' But these sayings, so far from implying disapproval of earthly possessions, imply rather that property and trading are the indispensable basis upon which the outward fabric of the social order is built. Christ does not counsel withdrawal from the activities of the world. He honours work. He recognises the legitimacy of trading. Many of His parables would have no meaning if His attitude to the industrial system of His day had been one of uncompromising hostility. He has no grudge against riches in themselves. In the parable of the talents it is the comparatively poor man who is censured while the rich is commended. To sum up what Jesus thought about wealth is not easy. Many have thought that He condemned the holding of property altogether. But such a conclusion cannot be drawn from His teaching. Possessions, both outward and inward, are rather to be brought to the test of His judgment. His influence would rather bring property and commerce under the control of righteousness and brotherhood. His ideal of life is to be attained through learning the right use of wealth rather than through the abolition of it. Wealth

can be used for the kingdom of God, and it is a necessary instrument in the Church's work. It may be consecrated like every other gift to the service of Christ. But there are mighty forces enlisted against its best usefulness, and only through the fullness of Christian grace can its good work be done. What Jesus does condemn however is the predatory instinct, that greed of gain which embodies itself everywhere in the spirit of plunder, exploitation, and the impulse to gambling. He can have nothing but condemnation for that great wave of money-love which has swept over Christendom in our time, affecting all classes. It has fostered self-indulgence, stimulated depraved appetites, corrupted business and politics, oppressed the poor, materialised our ideals, and weakened religious influences. 'From this craze of the love of money the voice of Jesus calls the people back to the sane life in Ethics and religion in which He is leader.' [1] What then ought to be the attitude of the Church to the industrial questions of our day? While some contend that the social question is really a religious question, and that the Church is untrue to its mission when it holds itself aloof from the economical problems which are agitating men's minds, others view with suspicion, if not with hostility, the deflection of religion from its traditional path of worship, and deem it a mistake for the Church to interfere in industrial movements.

A recent writer [2] narrates that in his boyhood he actually heard an old minister of the Church of Scotland declare in the General Assembly, 'We are not here to make the world better: we have only to pass through it on the way to glory.' 'No grosser travesty,' adds the author, 'was ever uttered. We *are* here to make the world better. We have a commission to stamp out evil and to prevent men from falling into it. If this is not Christian work, what is?'

At the same time a portion of the clergy have gone to the opposite extreme, identifying the kingdom of God with social propaganda, and thus losing sight of its spiritual

[1] Clarke, *Ideal of Jesus*, p. 258. [2] Watson, *Social Advance*.

and eternal, as well as its personal, significance. There has been moreover a tendency on the part of some to associate themselves with a political party, and to claim for the Church the office of judge and arbitrator in industrial strife. But surely it is one thing to degrade the Church to the level of a secular society, and another, by witness and by effort, to make the law of Christ dominant over all the relationships of life. Men are impatiently asking, 'Has the Church no message to the new demands of the age? Are Christians to stand apart from the coming battle, and preach only the great salvation to individual souls? *That* the Christian minister must never cease to do; but the Gospel, if it is to meet the needs of men, must be read in the light of history and experience, and interpreted by the signs of the times.

(2) The ground idea of Jesus' teaching was, as Troeltsch has pointed out,[1] the declaration of the kingdom of God. Everything indeed is relative to union with God, but in God man's earthly life is involved. Two notes were therefore struck by Jesus, a note of individualism and a note of universalism—love to God and love to man. These notes do not really conflict, but they became the two opposite voices of the Church, and gave rise to different ethical tendencies. The first religious communities consisted of the poor and the enslaved. It never occurred to them that they had civic rights: all they desired was freedom to worship Christ. Not how to transform the social world, but how to maintain their own religious faith without molestation in the world of unbelief and evil was their problem.

(3) In the early Catholic Church the spirit of individualism ruled. With the Reformation a new type of life was developed, and a new attitude to the social world was established. But while Lutheranism sought to exercise its influence upon social life through state regulation, Calvinism was more individualistic, and sought rather to

[1] *Die Soziallehren der Christlichen Kirchen und Gruppen*, a recent work on social ethics of great erudition and importance.

enforce its teaching by means of the personal life. The attitude of the various sects—Baptists, Pietists, Puritans —has been largely individualistic, and instead of endeavouring to rectify the abuses of industrial life they have been disposed rather to suffer the ills of this evil world, finding in faith alone their compensation and solace.

In modern times the tendency of the Church, Romanist and Protestant alike, has been toward social regeneration; and a form of Christian Socialism has even appeared which however lacks unity of principle and uniformity of action. The mediæval idea of a Holy Roman Empire, in which all nations and classes were to be consolidated, is now admitted to be a dream incapable of realisation, partly because the idea itself is illusory, but principally because the hold of the Papacy upon the people has been weakened. The agitation, 'Los von Rom' on the one hand, and the 'Modernist' movement on the other, have tended to dissipate the unity and energy of Catholicism. Nevertheless the Church, which is really the society of Christian people, is coming to see that it cannot close its eyes to questions which concern the daily life of man, nor hold aloof from efforts which are working for the social betterment of the world. To bring in the kingdom of God is the Church's work, and it is becoming increasingly evident that the kingdom, if it is to come in any real and living sense, must come where Jesus Himself founded it—upon the plane of this present life.

There are two considerations which make this work on the part of the Church at once imperative and hopeful. The first is that the Church is specially called upon by the command and example of its Founder to range itself on the side of the weak and helpless. It is commanded to bring the principles of brotherly love to bear upon the conditions of life which press most heavily upon the handicapped. It is called on in the spirit of its Master to rebuke the greed of gain and the callous selfishness which uses the toil, and even the degradation of others, for its own personal enjoyment. The Church only fulfils its function when

it is not only the consoler of the suffering but also the champion of the oppressed. And the other consideration is that in virtue of its nature and charter the Church is enabled to appeal to motives which the State cannot supply. It brings all social obligation under the comprehensive law of love. It exalts the principle of brotherhood. It lifts up the sacrifice of Christ, and seeks to make it potent over the hearts of men. It preaches the doctrine of humanity, and strives to win a response in all who are willing to acknowledge their common kinship and equality before God. It appeals to masters and servants, to employers and labourers, to rich and poor, and bids them remember that they are sharers alike of the Divine Mercy, pensioners together upon their Heavenly Father's love.

4. Whatever shape the obligation of the Church may take in regard to the social problems of the homeland, the duty of Christianity to the larger world of Humanity admits of no question. The ethical significance of the missionary movement of last century has been pronounced by Wundt,[1] the distinguished historian of morals, as the mightiest factor in modern civilisation. Speaking of humanity in its highest sense as having been brought into the world by Christianity, he mentions as its first manifestation the care of the sick, and then adds, 'the second great expression of Christian humanity is the establishment of missions.' It is unnecessary to dwell upon this modern form of unselfish enthusiasm. It has its roots in the simple necessity, on the part of the morally awakened, of sharing their best with other people. 'Man grows with the greatness of his purposes,' and no greater ideal task has ever presented itself to the imagination of man than this mighty attempt to conquer the world for Christ, and give to his brother men throughout the earth that which has raised and enriched himself.[2]

'The two great forming agencies in the world's history,' says a prominent political economist, 'have been the re-

[1] *Ethik*, vol. ii.
[2] King, *The Moral and Religious Challenge of our Times*, pp. 44 and 346.

ligious and the economic.'[1] On the one hand the economic is required as the basis of civilisation, but on the other the supreme factor is religion. The commercial impulse, carried on independently of any higher motive than self-interest, has however not infrequently reacted favourably on the moral life of the race. Mutual understanding, the sense of a common humanity, the virtues of honesty, fairness, and confidence upon which all legitimate commerce is founded, have paved the way in no small degree for the message of brotherhood and mercy. The present hour is the Church's opportunity. Already the world has been opened up, the nations of the earth are awakening to the greatness of life's possibilities. The danger is that the Oriental peoples should become satisfied with the mere externals of civilisation, and miss that which will assure their complete emancipation. Christianity was born in the East, though it has become the inheritance of the West. It is adapted by its genius to all men. And undoubtedly the West has no better boon to confer on the East than that on which its own life and hope are founded —the religion of Jesus Christ. If we do not give that, we are unfaithful to our Master's call; we falsify our own history, and wholly miss the purpose for which we have been entrusted with divine enlightenment and power.

[1] Marshall, *Principles of Economics*.

CHAPTER XIV

CONCLUSION—THE PERMANENCE OF CHRISTIAN ETHICS

In bringing to a close our study of Christian Ethics, we repeat that the three dominant notes of the Christian Ideal are—Absoluteness, Inwardness, and Universality. The Gospel claims to be supreme in life and morals. The uniqueness and originality of the Ethics of Christianity are to be sought, however, not so much in the range of its practical application as in the unfolding of an ideal which is at once the power and pattern of the new life. That ideal is Christ in whom the perfect life is disclosed, and through whom the power for its realisation is communicated. Life is a force, and character a growth arising in and expanding from a hidden seed. Hence in Christian Ethics apathy and passivity, and even asceticism and quietism, which occupy an important place in the moral systems of Buddha and Neo-Platonism, in mediæval Catholicism and the teaching of Tolstoy, play only a subsidiary part, and are but preparatory stages towards the realisation of a fuller life. On the contrary all is life, energy, and unceasing endeavour. 'I am come that ye may have life, and that ye may have it more abundantly.'

There is no finality in Christian Ethics. It is not a mechanical and completed code. The Ethic of the New Testament, just because it has its spring in the living Christ, is an inexhaustible fountain of life. 'True Christianity,' says Edward Caird, 'is not something which was published in Palestine, and which has been handed down by a dead tradition ever since; it is a living and growing

spirit, and learns the lessons of history, and is ever manifesting new powers and leading on to new truths.'

The teaching of Jesus is not merely temporary or local. It is an utter perversion of the Gospels to make the eschatology present in them the master-key to their meaning, or to derive the ethical ideal from the utterances which anticipate an abrupt and immediate end. Jesus spoke indeed the language of His time and race, and often clothed His spiritual purpose in the form of national expectation. But to base His moral maxims on an 'Interim-Ethic' adapted to a transitory world is to 'distort the perspective of His teaching, and to rob it of its unity and insight.' On the contrary, the Ethics of Jesus are everywhere characterised by adaptability, universality, and permanence, and in His attitude to the great problems of life there is a serenity and sympathy which has nothing in common with the nervous and excited expectation of sudden catastrophe.

In like manner it is a misinterpretation of the teaching of Jesus to represent asceticism as the last word of Christian Ethics. Renunciation and unworldliness are undoubtedly frequently commended in the New Testament, but they are urged not as ends in themselves but as means to a fuller self-realisation. Such was not the habitual temper and tone of Jesus in His relations to the world, nor was the ultimate purpose of His mission to create a type of manhood whose perfection lay in withdrawal from the interests and obligations of life. 'To single out a teaching of non-resistance as the core of the Gospels, to retreat from social obligations in the name of one who gladly shared them and was called a friend of wine-bibbers and publicans —all this, however heroic it may be, is not only an impracticable discipleship but a historical perversion. It mistakes the occasionalism of the Gospels for universalism.'[1]

Finally, there are many details of modern social well-being with which the New Testament does not deal, questions of present-day ethics and economics which cannot be decided by a direct reference to chapter and

[1] Prof. Peabody, *Harvard Theological Review*, May 1913.

verse, either of the Gospels or Epistles. The problems of life shift with the shifting years, but the nature of life remains unchanged, and responds to the life and the spirit of Him who was, and remains down the ages, the Light of men. The individual virtues of humility, purity of heart, and self-sacrifice are not evanescent, but are now and always the pillars of Christian Ethics; while the great principles of human solidarity, of brotherhood and equality in Christ, of freedom, of love, and service; the New Testament teachings concerning the family, the State, and the kingdom of God; our Lord's precepts with regard to the sacredness of the body and the soul, the duty of work, the stewardship of wealth, and the accountability to God for life with its variety of gifts and tasks—contain the germ and potency of all personal and social transformation and renewal.

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